COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

April 2004
No. 111
$6.95 U.S./$10.45 Can.
GEMSTONE PUBLISHING

COMIC
BOOK MARKETPLACE
No. 111
April 2004
$6.95 U.S./$10.45 Can.
GEMSTONE PUBLISHING
PAUL
GULACY
MASTER STORYTELLER
GULACY

Auctioning your comics?

Let us help you put your consignment choice in the proper light.

Simply considering consignment fees just isn't enough when you see what the MastroNet auction process can do for your comic books. And in the end, the difference in percentages is made up by just one more bid; a bid you're more likely to get in a MastroNet auction. Give your golden and silver age comics the spotlight they deserve. Call us today at **630-472-1200** or visit us at ***www.mastronet.com.***

We are now accepting consignments for our August, 2004 auction-call today!

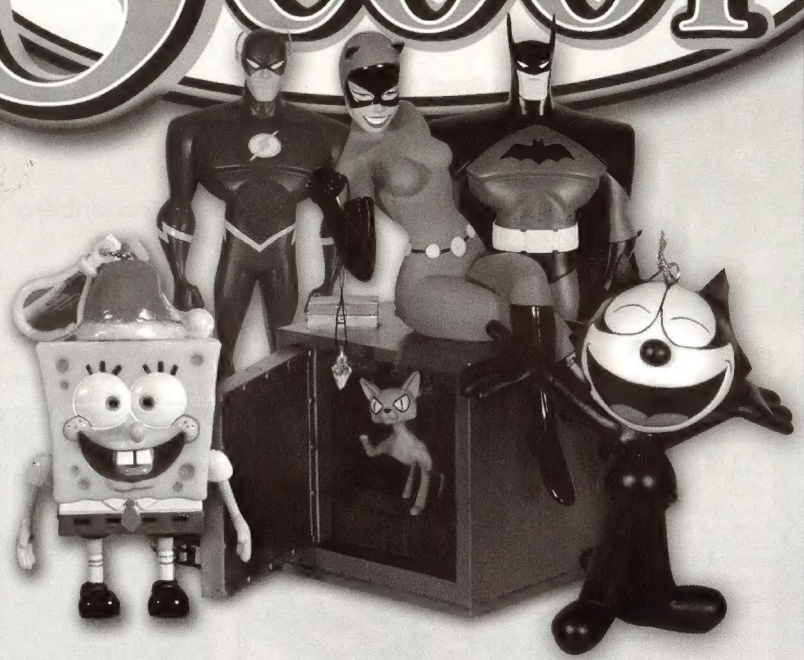
MASTRONET inc.

Premier Auctions
mastronet.com

Start the weekend with all your favorite characters

Start the weekend with

SCOOP



Scoop is the FREE, weekly, e-newsletter from Gemstone Publishing and Diamond International Galleries for collectors and pop culture enthusiasts of all ages. And every Friday, **Scoop** brings a whole new celebration of characters to your inbox - from *The Wizard of Oz* to *The Osbournes* to everyone in industry news, media happenings and so much more, **Scoop** gets you tuned into those trends that have shaped our history and our development as a society. Remember those characters you loved as a kid, and get to know characters that were just as beloved generations before. Visit **http://scoop.diamondgalleries.com** to check it all out and subscribe. It's just one more reason to love Fridays.

Flash, Catwoman and Batman ™ & ©2004 DC Comics.
SpongeBob Squarepants ™ & ©2004 Viacom International, Inc.
Felix the Cat ™ & ©2004 Felix the Cat Productions.
Scoop ™ & ©2004 Gemstone Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

A GEMSTONE PUBLICATION

Vol. 3 No. 111 April 2004

FEATURES

22 **Doctor Victor von Doom**
The world's greatest comic magazine villain by **Dan Johnson**

24 **CBM Interview: Jim Starlin**
Changing of the Guard conducted by **Bill Baker**

28 **In Praise of Great Men**
A Decade of Spurlock's Vanguard by **Bill Baker**

32 **CBM Interview: Paul Gulacy**
Master Storyteller conducted by **Michael Kronenberg**

44 **Pulp Roots of the X-Men**
The Vanisher Appears by **Will Murray**

COLUMNS

8 **Nolan's Notebook**
"Do They Exist?," the latest installment, by **Michelle Nolan**

14 **Weird Words**
DC's deluge from space, by **Pat Calhoun**

18 **The Sidebar**
Paste-pot villains, by **Mark Squirek**

21 **Inspiration Central: Dick Ayres**
Interview by **Bill Baker**

57 **Funnies Farrago: John Held, Jr**
The cartoonist as God, by **R.C. Harvey**

COLUMNS

68 **Collectable Character Statues**
Bring on the bad guys part 2, by **Mike Wilbur**

70 **The Michael Naiman Report**
I get mail, by **Michael Naiman**

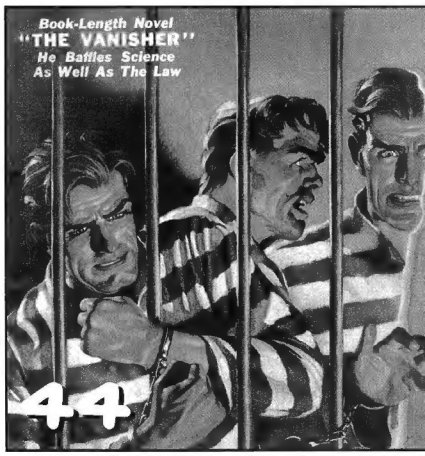
71 **CBM MarketWatch and Market Reports**
Sampling marketplace indicator sales, compiled by **Michael Naiman**

77 **That Wonderful Year**
This month it's 1950, by **Michelle Nolan**

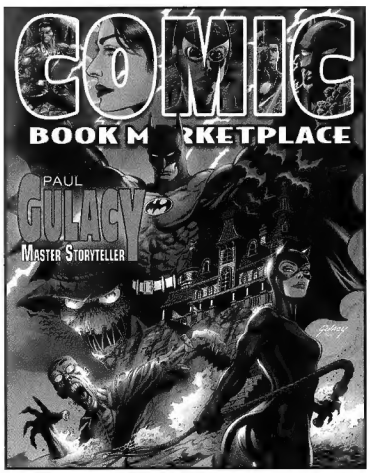
79 **Book Review, by Paul Gravett**
Carl Barks Conversations, by **Donald Ault**

DEPARTMENTS

6 **Marketplace Mail**



COVER A:
All characters TM & © DC Comics. Main image is from the trade paperback cover for *Batman: Terror*. Used with permission. All rights reserved.



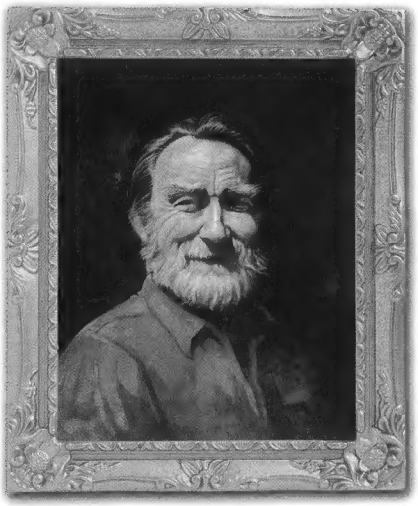
COVER B:
All characters TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc. Green Goblin and Spider-Man from *Amazing Spider-Man* #39, Red Skull and Captain America from *Captain America* #115, Galactus from *Thor* #168, Dr. Doom and Fantastic Four from *Fantastic Four Annual* #2. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Comic Book Marketplace – Gemstone Publishing, Inc.

copyright ©2004 Stephen A. Geppi, all rights reserved under international and Pan-American copyright conventions. The information in this publication is protected under U.S. copyright law. Absolutely no part of this publication may be reproduced in any form whatsoever (including mechanically, photographically, and/or electronically), without the prior written consent of the publisher. All articles and columns are the express opinion of the individual contributing artists and authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Gemstone Publishing, Comic Book Marketplace, its staff, or its advertisers. All characters, names, logos, trademarks, and symbols depicted and/or described in articles and other editorial material are owned and copyrighted by their individual companies.

Inquiries regarding advertising should be addressed to: telephone (888) 375-9800, ext. 249 or ext. 413. Inquiries regarding this publication and letters to the editor should be addressed to: Comic Book Marketplace, c/o Gemstone Publishing, Inc. (Missouri), PO Box 469, West Plains, MO 65775-0469, telephone (417) 256-2224 FAX (417) 256-5555. 12 issue subscription $70 (residents of Missouri and Maryland add applicable sales tax); $75 (Canada and Mexico, US funds); $130 (United Kingdom and Western Europe, US funds); $145 (Japan and Philippines, US funds). Advertising and subscription rates may change without notice. Issue Number 111, April 2004.

Letter from the Editor



I am just now realizing something which I should have figured out a long time ago, but you know about us old dogs. When Steve Geppi and John Snyder gave me the opportunity to take over *Comic Book Marketplace*, I immediately started thinking about how to make it a better magazine. Here was my chance to make it *my* magazine. And that's where I was wrong. It has taken me a while, but I'm finally realizing that this is *your* magazine, and if I intend to increase the circulation by trying to include more comic fans, I should be concentrating more on depth than width.

As a magazine primarily about comic books, it is natural to expect that we will occasionally shine our spotlight on some topics that are related and perhaps tangential to comic books. Any historical perspective on the medium of comics should be within the editorial scope of *CBM*, but at the same time, we will keep the primary emphasis on Golden Age and Silver Age comics.

I'm sure you have noticed that the last two issues have contained 32 pages of color, and we are using that color almost entirely for reproductions of comic book covers and lead features by our best writers which contain lots of color illustrations. We hope that this will make *CBM* more attractive to a wider audience. Most important, keep your letters and e-mails coming. Your feedback, both positive and negative, is solicited and is appreciated!

Russ

Russ Cochran
Editor & Publisher

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

STEPHEN A. GEPPI
President and Chief Executive Officer

JOHN K. SNYDER, JR.
Chief Administrative Officer

RUSS COCHRAN
Editor & Publisher

J.C. VAUGHN
Associate Publisher

ARNOLD T. BLUMBERG
East Coast Editor

MICHAEL KRONENBERG
Art Director and Cover Designer

BILL BAKER
JENNIFER CONTINO
WILL MURRAY
MICHELLE NOLAN
MARK SQUIREK
MIKE WILBUR
Contributors

PRICING & MARKET REPORTS
ROBERT M. OVERSTREET
Senior Pricing Editor

MICHAEL NAIMAN
Market Reports Editor
mnaiman1@cox.net

MARK HUESMAN
Pricing Coordinator
feedback@gemstonepub.com

ADVERTISING
ANGELA MEYER
Traffic & Operations Manager
ec@gemstonepub.com
Toll Free (800) 322-7978

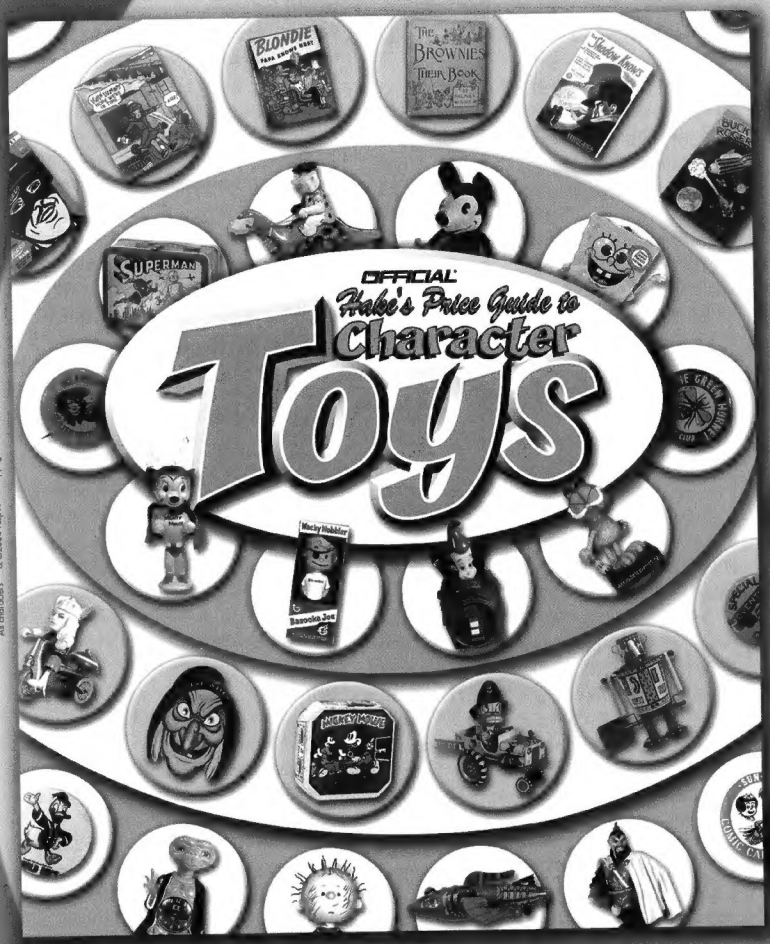
BRENDA BUSICK
Creative Director
bbrenda@gemstonepub.com

RESEARCH
JOE McGUCKIN
mjoe@diamondgalleries.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE & ADMINISTRATION
JUDY GOODWIN
Customer Service Manager
cbm@gemstonepub.com
Toll Free (800) 322-7978
Or (417) 256-2224

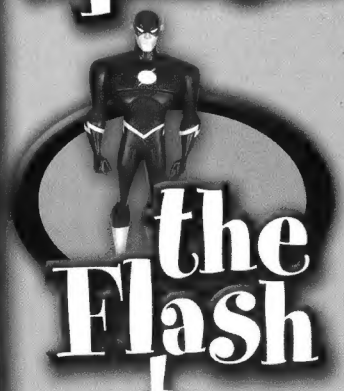
The Book that gives YOU EVERYTHING!

EVERY ITEM PICTURED!
BRAND NEW FIFTH EDITION!



All characters ™ & ©2004 respective Copyright holders. All rights reserved.

the Splash



the Flash

$

+Cold Hard CASH!

Collectors are like sponges, soaking up information about their favorite collectibles, trying to find out what they're worth, and always coming back for more. With *Hake's Price Guide to Character Toys* on your shelf, you'll have the perfect all-in-one historical and pricing reference guide to a century of cultural icons from Superman to SpongeBob. So, if you're looking to sell your collection or just see how much it's worth - *Hake's Price Guide to Character Toys* is the book for you!

$35 +s&h

COMIC SHOP LOCATOR SERVICE
888-COMIC-BOOK
888-266-4226

To order call Sara at 888-375-9800 ext. 410

Marketplace Mail

CBM reserves the right to edit letters selected for publication for length and/or content.
Send communications to: Comic Book Marketplace, PO Box 469, West Plains, MO 65775, or e-mail us at cbm@gemstonepub.com.

More carbon dated Silver

Hi, I just read your article "Carbon Dating the End of the DC Silver Age" [*CBM* 108] I thought it was really great. Although I really enjoy the Silver Age, I realize now that I am a Bronze Age fan. Most of the issues you cited [are the issues] where I began my runs of these DC titles. I am curious if you have ever done the same thing with Marvel? If so, what issues? I look forward to reading more of your magazines in the future, you have a new fan.

Rob Wilson
via e-mail

Dear Dave [Blanchard, author of "Carbon Dating the End of DC's Silver Age"],

One further note: a colleague corrected me, and pointed out that *Spectre* #1 (Nov/Dec 1967) contained the *Showcase* creative team of Fox and Anderson, and so should count on the Silver Age side of the line.

Paul Levitz
New York NY

Stand pat or change

I have been purchasing *CBM* since issue #45 and subscribing for the past 20+ issues. At first I was not pleased with the new editorial vision. I was patient and put up with month after month of sub-par issues. I know I was not alone in feeling this way—and I was not impressed by the editorials which I felt had a very paternalistic tone to them. It was almost as if we were being told to take our medicine. I appreciate the artistry of many of the "greats" but I felt that more balance could have been struck between comic strips and Gold and Silver Age books. The interviews with current creators and features on toys and statues were wasted pages in my opinion.

Around issue #96, I really felt that *CBM* had once again achieved a proper balance. The good articles were starting to outnumber those on toys and modern books. I felt happy renewing my subscription.

Two weeks after said renewal, I received issue 107 and learned that you folks were kicking around ideas regarding wholesale changes. I was very, very upset and wanted to regain my composure before corresponding.

I disagree with just about every change you suggest. I love old comic books, I love learning about them, learning about the creators and learning about the business aspects of the industry during different eras.

Price and value is of secondary importance to me, but it is there. I don't track my books' values regularly; I don't buy *Wizard*; I don't buy the monthly *Overstreet Comic Price Review*. That being said, the first page I turn to upon receiving a new issue of *CBM* is the "MarketWatch" table compiled by Michael Naiman. I am interested in seeing trends in terms of what books are selling above *Guide* and below *Guide*. I check off the books I own. You could go back through every issue of *CBM* that has featured this table (since 1999 I believe) and see my checkmarks. If that table wasn't there, it would take a lot of the fun out of the magazine for me.

I also love reading the "Market Reports" of the various dealers. Again, this is more to see the specific trends developing—learning about the retailing side of the industry and hearing about the various conventions. To me, this is a vital part of the publication. It makes me feel that I am in touch with the collecting community. It is more about trends and notable transaction than simply tracking the value of one's collection.

When *Comic Book Marketplace* is done well, it achieves a wonderful balance between commerce and art. That is a tough thing to achieve, so I am willing to allow for some bumps along the way.

Issue 109 just came tumbling through my mail slot and after a quick flip through, I am anxious to dive in. This looks like a great issue! It is distinct from *Wizard*, *Alter Ego*, *CBA* and the new *Back Issue*. It is just the best magazine out there and it would be a shame to mess with the format.

CBM is the only comic related magazine to which I subscribe. I do not want this to sound like a threat—but I would seriously consider canceling my subscription and requesting a refund should the format be changed.

Scott Mahaffy
Ontario Canada

Scott, you have no idea how much I appreciate getting a letter like this. I believe that CBM *has hit its stride within the last dozen or so issues and all your points are well taken.*

I admit to having a paternalistic and professorial attitude toward my CBM *readers. I think this is because I always admired Bill Gaines so much, and he was that way. And I'm a little older than most comic fans. As I said in the letters column last month, I received so many letters telling me* not *to change* CBM *it has convinced me that we are now on the right track with the look and feel of the magazine.*

So, we won't be making any major changes. We'll just continue to try to do a better job within the current format. Your letter is a model of what constructive criticism should be. Thanks again for sending it.

RC

It seems with a pretty stable base of readers you have two options to boost revenues. First you move *CBM* into new areas and hope new sales are significant, or come up with a device/gimmick to entice existing buyers to pick up an additional copy. The reprinting of Golden Age comics (such as *Planet Comics*) inside *CBM* (or *Comics*) would work with me. It would have to be roughly comic size with color or black & white being an option. In fact AC Comics during the *GGA Quarterly* run featured stories in color or black & white and it worked nicely. Once the comic is removed from the magazine, a second copy of the magazine is now required

FANZINES WANTED!
PRIVATE COLLECTOR SEEKS COMIC BOOK FANZINES FROM EARLY AND MID-60'S. WILL BUY COLLECTIONS OR SINGLE ISSUES. HIGH INTEREST IN DITTO/MIMEO FANZINES FROM 1961-68.
AARON CAPLAN
1310 E. MAPLE AVE
STERLING, VA 20164
FUGTUSSEY1@AOL.COM
CALL AFTER 6PM EST:
703-731-8048

and completes the equation. Brief summaries of creators featured in the reprint is a must as well.

To me, the letters section as well needs an overhaul. In theory, create two sections, one that comments on *CBM* issues and a second that could cover any comic related topic. This would allow you a more uniform number of letters and not to get caught short as has happened in the past.

It was your idea (I believe) that *CBM* might be published less frequently. I don't believe this new mag can come out on less then a quarterly schedule but maybe I am wrong. It couldn't hurt to run the Golden Age cover on the front of the mag as well. In fact forget about the cover A and B thing; it may have worked for *X-Men* and *Batman* but your readership is different in what they view collectable. Paper quality isn't a factor to me except for covers, but you know best.

The name "Comics" as a title really is not an improvement over what's in place and even though *Comic Book Marketplace* is a misnomer of sorts (it isn't the *Comic Buyer's Guide*), it holds a charm, I believe, that would be missed.

As always, the best,

Mike Egan
via e-mail

He does Mind

Having just caught up on my *CBM* reading, I must comment on a few things. First, thanks a bunch for the great coverage on comics and related topics. I always enjoy every issue. I would not pay $6.95 if I did not. It is all new information for me. I feel after I read each issue I am far more enlightened (thanks to you guys) on our fun and wonderful hobby.

Issue 107 was wonderful. The more I read about Victor Fox and his comic books the more I am intrigued. I do not own any Fox comic books, so the cover gallery and information covered in the article were very interesting to me. And the Paul Norris article by Mr. Murray was priceless. I am glad the Golden Age is alive and well.

Thank you for the coverage on Mike Grell in #108. A very talented and interesting artist. I tell you "Jon Sable, Freelance" was/is one of my favorite series. I would love to see Mr. Grell do a Doc Savage or a Shadow comic book series. The "B-Littled" article by Jon Berk was great and I also enjoyed the "Comic Book Paperbacks" feature. I do have a set of the DC comics Tempo books in a slipcase.

Another great time was #109. First thing that comes to mind is Ron Goulart's article on "Eminent Villains of the Golden Age." And who do we have at the top of the page? Mr. Mind. I have always liked Mr. Mind. One of my favorite stories was "Power Of Shazam!" which of course had Mr. Mind. In that particular story you could send away to DC for your very own "Mr. Mind's Venusian Decoder Card" so you can decipher what our villainous Mr. Mind was saying in the story. Great stuff! Again, Mr. Murray gives us another informative feature. This time it is on "The Skull and The Black Hood." I really enjoyed that.

I have gone on long enough. Thanks to everyone for great coverage on our hobby and informative articles. From Michelle Nolan's wonderful articles to "The Greatest Comic Book Ever" it all entertains and enlightens. Thank You!

Steve Ogden
Germantown MD

WillElderWeb

I heard from Gary Vandenberg, Will Elder's son-in-law, and I used their old web site address in my article. I'd appreciate if you can work it in as soon as possible that the correct web site is: www.willelder.net. Thanks.

Steve Ringgenberg
Phoenix AZ

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

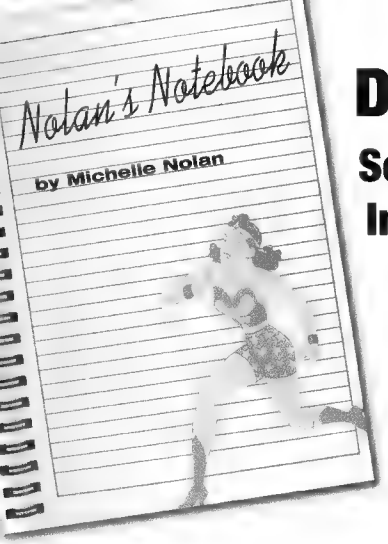
BACK ISSUE DEPARTMENT

These issues are available...

#50	Julius Schwartz,Captain Comet	$10
#65	Pre-Code Crime, Bob Kane	$8
#66	Women of the Spirit, Batman & Raven!	$8
#72	Iron Man & Subby, Larry Lieber Part I	$8
#73	Warren Horror, Larry Lieber Part II	$8
#76	Rocky & Bullwinkle, Poe, Wolverton	$8
#79	Blue Beetle, Fred Guardineer, Captain Action	$8
#83	Magnus, Saturn Girl, Plastic Man	$8
#84	Morrow, Ditko, Romita Sr., Brainiac	$8
#85	Eisner, Manning, Whitman Mystery Part I	$8
#86	Perez Part I, Bronze Age, Whitman Mystery Part II	$8
#87	George Evans, Detectives Inc.	$8
#88	Murphy Anderson, Rudolph	$8
#89	Hal Foster, Frank Cho, Perez Part II	$8
#90	Patriotic issue, Bob Lubbers, George Perez Part III	$8
#91	Johnny Craig, Harry "A" Chesler	$8
#92	Joe Kubert, Eddie Stanky, Mary Worth	$8
#93	Alex Raymond, Flash Gordon, Gail Simone	$8
#94	GA Green Lantern, Spectre, Perez Wrap-up	$8
#95	Disney strip art, Miracleman	$8
#96	Milton Caniff, Marc Hempel	$8
Sp#5	Spider-Man, Gerber Sticker Set #8	$12
#97	Curt Swan, T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents	$8
#98	Western: Dick Ayers, Graham Ingels, John Severin	$8
#99	Marvel 1965, Iron Man, Hulk, Transformers	$8
#100	Charles Schulz, H. J. Ward, Pulp Roots of Batman	$8
#101	Archie, Butch Guice, CrossGen	$8
#102	Lev Gleason, Russ Heath, Commercial Comics Co.	$8
#103	Disney Comics, Jack Bradbury, Don Rosa	$8
#104	Batman, Neal Adams, Loeb & Lee, Lew Schwartz	$9
#105	Wrightson, Kaluta, Jeffrey Jones, Bruce Jones	$9
#106	Good Girl Art, Rima, Cat Girl, John Celardo	$9
#107	Victor Fox, Aquaman's Paul Norris	$9
#108	End of DC's SA, Geo. Carlson, GA Black Market	$9
#109	GA Villains, Neal Adams Pt. 2, Infantino	$9

Prices include postage.
Add $2 each for orders outside U.S.
MD (5%) & MO (6.975%) add sales tax.
MasterCard, VISA orders call 800 322 7978.

CBM BACK ISSUES
GEMSTONE PUBLISHING
PO BOX 469
WEST PLAINS, MO 65775-0469



Do They Exist? (The Never-Ending Saga Continues)

Some "New" Items Are Included for Your Consideration

I've had several requests for yet another installment of my long-running "Do They Exist?" project, so here we go again—with a few twists thrown in for this fifth edition.

I received plenty of feedback after the fourth installment (*CBM* #87, Nov 2001), especially from Dan Stevenson and Gary Watson, who may have the largest collections of different vintage comic books on the planet and are constantly on the prowl for obscure items. I feel mighty fortunate to have dear friends like these guys, whose penchant for absolute accuracy keeps me on my four-color toes.

I couldn't begin to list all the other kind folks who have written to me or caught up with me at shows across the nation. When I began this series in *CBM* #33 (Mar 1996), I never imagined it would turn into a never-ending quest for information. Now I'm resigned to the fact that we many never know the absolute answer to some of these questions.

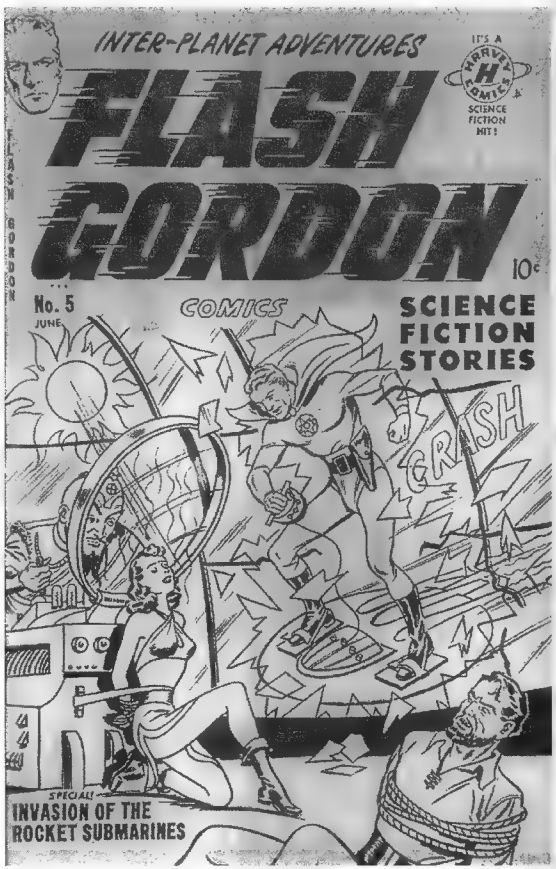
For this installment, I've provided two lists—one of short runs that surely don't exist, and another of comics that either almost certainly don't exist or are true rarities from the 1930s through the early 1970s. Please don't blame Bob Overstreet, though, for keeping some of this information in the *Comic Book Price Guide*—he still needs to protect his massive project, as do other major publishers of large indexes. They all have their ways of protecting their data!

Collectors can be a spoiled bunch, though. Regardless of how you feel about the listed values of comics in price guides and the procedures used to obtain the information, collectors should realize that the info contained in all the large guides is a series of truly remarkable compilations, considering so much has had to be done from scratch. Thirty-five years ago, when the "modern" comic book as we know it was only some 35 years old, far less was known about the vast majority of the slightly more than 50,000 different newsstand issues published from 1933-68.

By the way, a caveat to all collectors and writers: many folks outside the comic book community, and even some insiders, consistently confuse "issues" with "titles" or use those terms interchangeably. There certainly were not more than 50,000 titles! I've seen such mistakes appear in far too many media reports beginning with mass-market publications in the 1940s and '50s.

Few, if any, such extensive fields in pop culture have been so exhaustively researched virtually from scratch as have comic books, even with very little in the way of corporate records to consult. On a percentage basis, much more remains to be discovered about both the existence and contents of both pulp and slick magazines of the 1900-1970 era, for example, compared to what we now know about comic books.

In fact, I'm not sure which comparison amazes me more—contrasting the first *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* in 1970 with the current edition, or comparing the first San Diego Comic Convention in 1970 with the current version. Both absolutely boggle this comic book long-timer's



Flash Gordon #5 (Harvey, 1951) black & white image of original art—does comic exist?

INVEST IN THE BEST.

The long-standing leader in high-quality archival supplies, E. Gerber Supply Products understands why every one of its valued customers is serious about this deceptively simple sentiment. Why else would they choose its archival products – the finest preservation and storage supply products on the market – to keep their collectibles pristine and resistant to the ravages of age?

Top of the Line Preservation And Storage Supplies
E. Gerber PRODUCTS
...At The Lowest Prices

The answer is simple:

E. Gerber Supply Products offers serious protection for the serious collector. And its customers only demand the best. **Shouldn't you?**

Gerber's New Graded Comics Storage Box
Easy as CGC, 1-2-3!

Make it easy to store and transport comics that have been rated by Comics Guaranty, LLC (CGC)!

- Measures 15" x 8 ½" x 13"
- Holds up to 30 CGC-"slabbed" comics
- Durable construction withstands 200 pounds of pressure

Order more and save!

Quantity	Cost Per Box	S&H
1-9	$4.50 each	$8.00
10-49	$3.30 each	$20.00
50+	$2.75 each	$40.00

Top of the Line Preservation And Storage Supplies
E. Gerber PRODUCTS
...At The Lowest Prices

The Best Protection at the Best Price!

For a complete list of our affordable archival products, call us toll-free at **1-800-79-MYLAR** from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, or mail your request to:

E. Gerber Products ● 1720 Belmont Avenue ● Suite C ● Baltimore, MD 21244
Fax: 1-410-944-9363 ● e-mail: archival@egerber.com

www.egerber.com

In business since 1974
Redbeard's Book Den
redbeardsbookden.com
• Our incredible selection is updated daily
• Searchable database with shopping cart
• Secure credit card service and PayPal
• Managed by Ron Pussell, senior Price Guide consultant since 1980
• Always buying!
(775) 831-4848

mind!

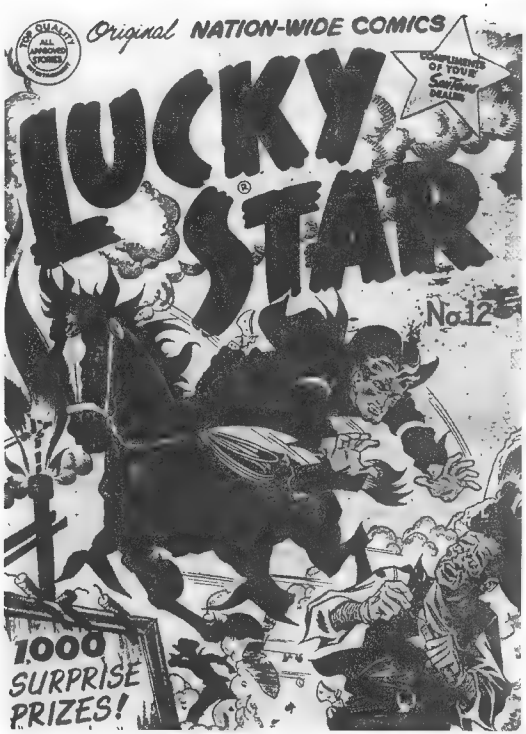
On my list of "Impossible to Find—Or Unlikely to Exist?" I have included several comic books that people swear they have seen. If you can provide photocopies of both the cover and the indicia of any of these, I would be immensely grateful! I would also love it if you want to suggest other issues that may not exist.

By the way, I did not include the "bandit" IW and Super Reprint issues circa 1958-64 with this installment. Those more properly belong with a separate article, especially since I know several IW-Super completists, such as Stevenson, Watson and Scott McAdam, and I need to consult them first.

Some collectors invariably ask me, "Why do you bother with things like *Dinky Duck* #9? Who cares?" The answer is simple: Every company that has ever produced comics has a few collectors who are rabid completists about that company. That explains why some seemingly cheap comics go for such high values on eBay. It would be asking far too much of *Overstreet* or any other index to know everything about the relative scarcity of every comic, particularly the issues that nominally would be inexpensive.

Let's start with romance comics, since this is one of my favorite fields and also has increased exponentially in popularity in recent years. I've seen people pay a lot more than I ever would have dreamed for romance comics, but I feel they've become so popular in large part because most of them still are so much more affordable than most other genres.

I once thought that Jim Vadeboncoeur and yours truly were the world's No. 1 collectors of romance comics, but I long ago surrendered any claim to that distinction to Dan Stevenson. He now needs only 43 newsstand romance comics out of 5,875 issues published from the 1940s through the 1980s! In all likelihood, Dan needs only 36 issues, since that count of 43 includes seven issues that probably do not exist. However, his counts do not include rebound giants from the likes of Fox. Even though the covers of those rebound giants are usually not reprints (but are often awful), there is no point in paying big bucks when you have all the original comics.



Lucky Star (Nationwide, 1953-55) issue #12 has been seen (copy is from black & white image).

By the way, either Jim or I—or both of us—have 15 of those 43 issues that Dan needs. That means that among the three of us, we need a maximum of 28 issues—including the seven issues that may not exist—to have *every* romance comic. I guess that's what happens when you focus on those thousands of "cheap boxes" for a combined total of well over 100 years!

I would run a list of Dan's romance issue needs—since you have to admit it's pretty amazing for anyone to have nearly every romance comic ever published!—except that I don't want people to run up the prices. He also buys a lot of upgrades, too, so if you get an order from him, you can't assume it's one of the final few!

The reason I mention all this is by way of demonstrating how we can claim with a high degree of accuracy that certain issues almost surely do not exist. And yet…frustration, thy name is Marvel's *Love Tales* #59! Or Marvel's *Love Trails* #2! Or Stanmor's *Diary Confessions* #13! Or Charlton's *Sweet Romance* #1 and *Teen Secret Diary* (second series) #1.

How can we ever be sure those five issues definitely do not exist? By the same token, we also can't be absolutely certain we have discovered every United States newsstand romance comic, though we think we have. We haven't made any new discoveries since the previous millennium!

The other two mythical books are IW's *Love and Marriage* #1 (supposedly 1958) and Magazine Enterprise's *Dream Book of Romance* A-1 Series #124—surely an error, since *Hot Dog* #3 is A-1 #124 and the last *Dream Book* is A-1 #110 (#8), dated Oct 1954.

Now for the "new" old stuff: Here are a couple of first-time entries on our lists

PREPARE TO ENTER . . .

WESTERNS
WAR
MYSTERY

HOUSE OF COMICS .com

SUPERHEROES
HUMOR
DISNEY

SUPER SELECTION OF BACK ISSUES, 1936-PRESENT
info@houseofcomics.com PRICED BELOW GUIDE! 510-849-2094

of possibly mythical comics—ACG's *Soldiers of Fortune* #13 (supposedly Feb/Mar 1953) and *Harvey's Strange Story* #1 (purportedly a Jun/Jul 1946 one-shot). Lots of collectors of the American Comics Group and Harvey Comics would love to see these!

I have heard from the many completists of both companies who claim these comics must not exist. Can anyone prove they do? Or were they only pictured in house ads? Both companies were known to produce such mythical ads at one time or another for other titles. Dan also says he has seen art from *Strange Story* #1, but was this an ashcan or black-and-white book?

ACG and Harvey are other companies that have their completists. Or, in the case of Harvey, partial completists, since that company produced such a huge number of issues.

We're also still looking for Charlton's *Li'l Jinx* #5 from 1955. Charlton apparently skipped #5 after buying the rights to Toby's *Super Brat* #1-4 and re-titling Frank Johnson's cute little kid strip *Li'l Genius*. The first known Charlton issue of this long-running series is #6.

Here's another maddening mystery if you're one of the numerous St. John completists out there. St. John, a highly underrated company, published a 12-issue series in 1954 known as "Approved Comics." At least nine of these dozen issues were reprints; the originals, possibly with inventory art, are *Invisible Boy* #2 and *Daring Adventures* #6 (I have both) and perhaps *Crime on the Run* #8 (which I haven't seen in a long time).

So what's the mystery? It's this: Approved #10 (Jul 1954) is entitled *Dinky Duck*, which was also an ongoing St. John series in 1954. *Dinky Duck* #10 is Sep 1954. But nobody I know has ever seen #9 of this cute series. Did St. John, for some inexplicable reason, take the Dinky Duck material intended for #9 and publish it as Approved #10? That seems to be the case, but who can know for sure?

Or, for that matter, does anyone know if Approved #10 contains original or reprinted Dinky Duck material? One hint: since the character was licensed from the Paul Terry franchise, it could be that #8 was intended to be the last regular issue, since there is an eight-month gap until the real #10. Don't you just love the theory and detection needed to figure out this stuff?

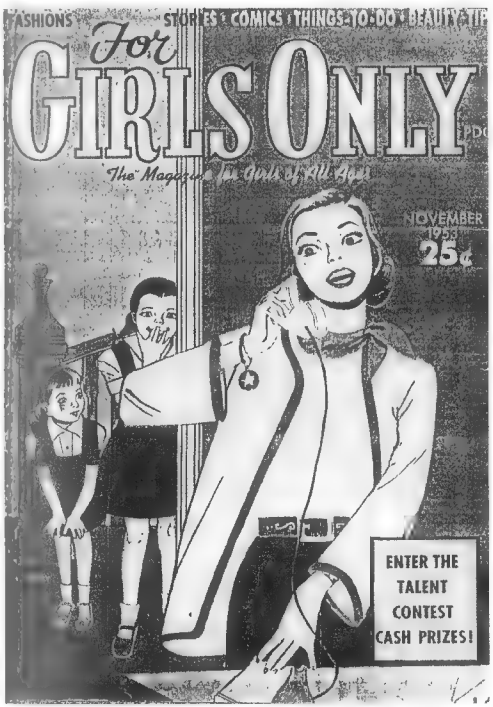
Now for a Mazie mystery. By now, most collectors of vintage teen humor comics know that *Mazie* #1-7 were published in 1950-51 only as 5-cent, small-size newsstand comics from Nationwide Publishers. Nationwide produced three other concurrent small-sized series—*Lucky Star*, *Captain Atom* and *Do-Do*. Mazie then became a regular-sized comic with #8 (Oct 1952) and continued under Nationwide through #13 (Mar 1954); I own both #8 and #13.

The mystery involves the Harvey takeover of the Mazie franchise: Harvey definitely began the series with #14 (Feb 1955)—yet the *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* lists a Harvey #13 for Dec 1954. Were there two #13 issues? Dan Stevenson and I have searched for a Harvey *Mazie* #13 for many, many years.

Why do we ask? Because it's tough to give up on some *Overstreet* listings. I remember that Ajax's *All-True Romance* #30, too—after more than two decades of searching!

We know that *Captain Atom* and *Do-Do* both ended with #7, but *Lucky Star* #12 and 14 have been sighted, in the same small size though neither with a price on the cover. In fact, Rod Matlack of Parker, Colorado, sent me a copy of the cover of *Lucky Star* #12 from 1954, a giveaway for Lucky Star Jeans. The question there is: Were *Lucky Star* #8-14 all published and were they all giveaways? And were they reprints of #1-7? Chances are they were.

Has anyone ever seen a *Dynamic Comics* #25 from the Canadian publisher Superior in 1948? Chesler originally published this title, but Superior bought the rights beginning with #23 (Nov 1947) and the last known issue is #24 (Mar 1948), with the last appearance of Dynamic Man. Or was it? This is the only remaining mystery involving a Golden Age super hero, since it's almost universally assumed now that Fox indeed



Digest-sized **For Girls Only** #1 (Bernard Baily Enterprises, Nov 1953).

skipped *Blue Beetle* #43 in 1946.

Now for several nifty reader contributions:

Paul P. DeDomenico of Santa Fe, New Mexico, sent me a real treasure—a copy of the original art for Harvey's *Flash Gordon* #5 (Jun 1951). The art—not by Alex Raymond, even though #1-4 contain Raymond reprints—still begs a big question: Was #5 ever published? Nobody I know has ever seen a copy. Overstreet lists it as a rare small-size, black-and-white issue sent to subscribers only. Can anyone help?

David and Cindy Kell of Canton, Missouri, sent me cover copies of the digest-sized *For Girls Only* #1 (Nov 1953) and #2 (May/Jun 1954) from Bernard Baily Enterprises, a small company run by the Golden Age artist. The Kells discovered #2, which is now listed in *Overstreet*. These are only partially comics, but they are among the rarest of all the comic magazines for girls, which began in 1941 with *Calling All Girls*.

Thanks, all! I would love to receive copies of the covers (in color?) of any of the books on the accompanying lists. I would especially love to see *Soldiers of Fortune* #13, *Strange Story* #1, the Harvey *Mazie* #13, *Dinky Duck* #9 and *Diary Confessions* #13. In the meantime, keep digging into those boxes! You just might find me alongside.

Digest-sized **For Girls Only** #2 (Bernard Baily Enterprises, May/Jun 1954).

MICHELLE'S LIST LAST RAN IN **CMB** 87

MICHELLE'S BIG LIST OF IFFY COMICS

[Contact Michelle Nolan, via this magazine, with info you possess on these comics]

NON-EXISTENT RUNS

The following runs of three or more issues do not exist:

Captain and the Kids #1-15 (United Features; series begins with #16).

Danger Is Our Business #4-10 (Toby; series ends with #3).

Jungle Jim #16-20 (Standard, not Dell; the Standard series begins with #11 and ends with #15 in 1950).

Mazie #1-7 (regular-sized version) (Nationwide Publishers; the small-sized #1-7 were priced as nickel comics and began the regular-sized 10-cent issues with #8).

Mighty Atom #4-6 (second series) (Magazine Enterprises; series ends with #3 in 1958).

Return of the Outlaw #8-11 (Toby; series ends with #7).

Sweetie Pie #3-14 (Ajax; series ends with #2; Pines published #15 as a one-shot).

United States Marines #7-11 (Listed as Toby; possibly confused with Toby's **Monty Hall of the U.S. Marines**; The Magazine Enterprises series runs #1-8).

Western Frontier #4-7 (P.L. Publishers; series ends with #3).

IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND (OR UNLIKELY TO EXIST?)

Can anyone prove that these listed issues do exist? No evidence can be found, and yet—

Adventures of the Dover Boys #2 (Archie, 1950; this reportedly has been sighted, but can anyone provide positive proof?)

Al Capp's Dogpatch #4 (Harvey, 1949; reportedly sighted, but can anyone provide proof it exists)?

All Comics #1 (Chicago Nite Life News, 1945; is this the same as William F. Wise's **Book of All Comics** from 1945?)

All-Picture Comedy Carnival #1 (St. John, 1952; is this the same as listing for St. John's **Comedy Carnival?)**

All-Real Confession Magazine #4 (Fox, 1949; #3 exists; does this rebound #4 exist?)

All-True All Picture Police Cases #2 (Avon, 1952; was there only #1?)

All-True Romance #8 (Comic Media; there are two #7 issues for Sep and Nov 1952, followed by #9 for Jan 1953).

Animal Crackers #1-2 (Fox; the only known Fox issue is #31 Jul 1950).

Atomic Mouse #53-54 (Charlton; series apparently ended with #52 in 1963).

Blue Beetle #43 (Fox, 1946; apparently skipped an issue).

Blue Circle #6 (Rural Home, 1945; remaindered cover for #6 exists slapped around miscellaneous early 1950s issues).

Car #54, Where Are You? #2 (1962 issue #2 exists; 1964 issue does not).

Daffy Tunes #NN issue (Four Star 1947; this title apparently exists only as #12, Aug 1947, continued from **Captain Flight** #11).

Diary Confessions #13 (Stanmor, 1956; #12 Dec 1955 and #14 Apr 1956 are rare but do exist; this is the biggest mystery in all of romance comics).

Dinky Duck #9 (Standard, 1954; did #9 somehow wind up as Dinky Duck issue of Approved Comics #10? Approved #10 does exist along with the regular series #8 and 10 for 1954).

Dinky Duck #16 (St. John, 1955; a #16 does exist from Pines in 1956 after transfer of license).

Dream Book of Romance #8 (Magazine Enterprises; supposedly A-1 #124 Oct/Nov 1954. However, the real **Dream Book** #8 is Sep/Oct 1954, also known as A-1 #110, and the real A-1 #123 is **Hot Dog Comics** #3).

Dynamic Comics #25 (Superior; series ends with #24 in 1948).

Ensign O'Toole #2 (Dell 1964; only one issue appeared).

Espionage #2 (Dell 1964; only one issue appeared).

Everybody's Comics (Fox; how many of the four 1940s giants listed in the **Guide** really exist?)

Feature Stories Magazine #4 (Fox; apparently doesn't exist).

Flash Gordon #5 (Harvey, 1951; small size black-and-white issue supposedly was sent only to subscribers after series ended with #4. I have been sent a photocopy of the cover, but does the entire issue exist?)

Flying Cadet #7 (Magazine Enterprises; there are two #6 issues for Sep and Oct 1943 and #8 is Nov 1943).

Gulliver's Travels #2 and 3 (Dell, 1965-66; This was a one-shot, but Dell also issued a Junior Treasury #3 of Gulliver's Travels, leading to confusion).

Hello Pal #3 (Harvey, 1943; at least one version of #3 exists, are there two different #3 issues, one with a Rocketman reprint and one without?)

Hocus Pocus #9 (Parents, 1946; The first eight issues were entitled Funny Book; was this advertised but never published?)

Hooray Comics #1 (Pictured in Gerber but is it Canadian?)

Hot Shot Charlie #1 (Hillman, 1947; no evidence it exists).

Li'l Genius #5 (Charlton 1954-55; Charlton series apparently begins with #6 after picking up from Toby's **Super Brat** #1-4).

Little Groucho/Grouchy #16 (Reston, 1955; this exists as #1 and #2 with slightly different names, but no evidence of #16).

Little Ike #1 (St. John, 1953; this series apparently started as **Little Joe** #1 and became **Little Ike** with #2).

Love Tales #59 (Marvel, 1952 or 1954; title stopped with #58 in 1952 and apparently picked up with #60 in 1955).

Love Trails #2 (Marvel, 1950; only #1 has been proven to exist).

Lucky Star #8-14 (Nationwide, 1953-55; issues #12 and 14 have been seen, but are they true newsstand comics such as the five-cent #1-7 were, or are they giveaways? Was the entire series of #8-14 published?)

Madhouse #4 (Ajax, 1957, second series; first series ran four issues, but second series apparently ended with #3).

Mazie #13 (1954; Magazine Publishers printed #13 for Mar 1954, but is there a second #13 for Dec 1954 from Harvey?)

Merry-Go-Round #21 (Croydon, 1946; no evidence this exists).

Movie Comics: Lady and the Tramp #1 (Gold Key, 1967; this version evidently is mythical).

Parade Comics #1 or **Frisky Animals on Parade** #1 (Sep 1957; the series continued under the **Frisky Animals on Parade** title with #2, but which title was the true #1?)

Picture Crimes #1 (1937; is the issue pictured in Gerber a newsstand comic?)

Porky Pig #99 (Whitman, 1981; does this one exist in any format?)

Soldiers of Fortune #13 (ACG, 1953; did the series end with #12? Many ACG collectors are frustrated with trying to find #13).

Strange Story #1 (Harvey, 1946; this has long been listed as a newsstand comic, but was this an ashcan or black-and-white issue?)

Super Duper #5, 8, 11 (1940s; are these Canadian Harvey reprints?; not to be confused with Able Manufacturing's **Super-Dooper** #1-8 from 1946).

Sweet Romance #1 (Charlton, 1968; no evidence it exists).

Teen Secret Diary #1 (Charlton, 1972; not to be confused with first series).

Tommy of the Big Top #10 (Standard, 1948; this series apparently started with #11).

True Comics and **Adventure Stories** #2 (Parents, 1965; this apparently was a one-shot; with same publisher as 1940s Parents Magazine comic titles?)

Varsity #1 (Parents, 1945; the company published a magazine with this title, but this apparently was never a comic book).

Wild Bill Hickok and Jingles #76 (Charlton, 1960; series apparently ends with #75).

by Pat Calhoun

Silver DC SF: "The Deluge From Space"

The greatest super-villain of Silver Age DC appeared more often in the science fiction than the super-hero books and came in many different forms. It was alien menace, interplanetary invasion, attacks from space by giant turtles, giant frogs, giant blobs of water, robotic toys, winged gorillas, invisible monsters, faceless creatures, and various entities out to drown the Earth, or split it in two, harpoon it, and even cube it (it's less likely to roll off the shelf that way!). Of course DC's super-heroes helped out too: as Superman faced off Brainiac and others, and even the down-to-earth Batman fought in the great us v. BEM (bug-eyed-monsters) war. Perhaps the most outrageous example came when the stalwart Revolutionary Tomahawk tussled with 18th-century threats from out there in between dealing with the Redcoats and the Redskins. Although this theme appeared regularly in early and mid-1950s DCs, it dominated after the Sputnik launch in 1957 and the official start of the space race. As enjoyable as these books were and are, one can't help but wonder at DC's political savvy that took the comics medium from their inspirer of juvenile delinquency image in the pre-Code years to the young-scientist-building of the space war stories. Wasn't it obvious that the best defense against alien menaces was a strong offense? And that high-tech weapons makers got fat contracts?

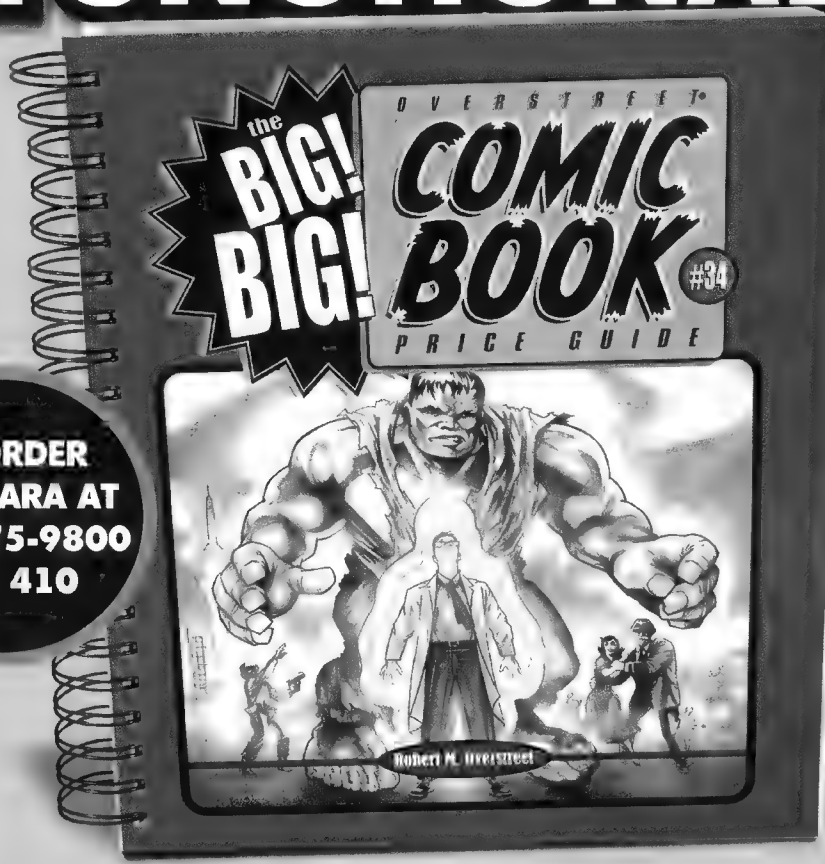
Whether DC was overtly shilling for the government or just cleverly marketing sci-fi fun, the military-industrial complex must have been pleased. And in the best ops the "cat's paw" doesn't necessarily know who guides it.

That said, let's concentrate on the fun part by looking at a half-dozen examples of DC's Silver villains from the void. All of them hail from the first half of 1960, the ultimate moment of Silver DC (can you say JLA?). *Strange Adventures* #113 (Feb 1960) features a superb Gil Kane double-barreled flood-plus-monster scene. The story inside is interesting in that the monster is really an intelligent alien seeking a method of disposing of his planet's atomic waste. This is also the issue with the famous tale where editor Julie Schwartz and writer Gardner Fox (thinly disguised) thwart an invasion from a sub-atomic world in "Menace of the Shrinking Bomb," with art by Sid Greene. The idea that DC's interplanetary paranoia may have had some psy-op elements is not a stab at Julie and company; on the contrary, it's an interesting subtext to a fine body of comics work.

In fact the aliens and the humans in "The Deluge From Space" do work out a way to "take out" both planets' nuclear garbage, and in the next issue, *Strange Adventures* #114 (Mar 1960), the superlative UFO-attack cover is explained on the inside as aliens coming to help us ward off the passing of a white dwarf star whose intense gravity would upset the solar system. It's an impressive story with excellent Russ Heath art and does show that all the extraterrestrials weren't out to get us. "The Man Who Created Himself" is a

Strange Adventures #113 (Feb 1960) DC's alien menace covers shared the stands with the "pre-hero Marvel monster" covers, fighting tooth and claw for youngsters' dimes.

FLIPPABLE! FACTUAL! FUNCTIONAL!



The Incredible Hulk and Incredible Hulk #1 cover image™ ■ ©2003 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

TO ORDER CALL SARA AT 888-375-9800 EXT. 410

It's ***The Official Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide #34*** in a special limited edition! Featuring a stunning re-creation of Jack Kirby's cover for *Incredible Hulk* #1 by John K. Snyder III (*Green Lantern: Brightest Day/Darkest Night*), this edition contains only the pricing, Top Ten charts, selected glossary and text from the regular edition of the *Guide*.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Stay-Flat Spiral Binding ▼ Larger Print ▼ Room For Notes ▼ A Must For Serious Collectors

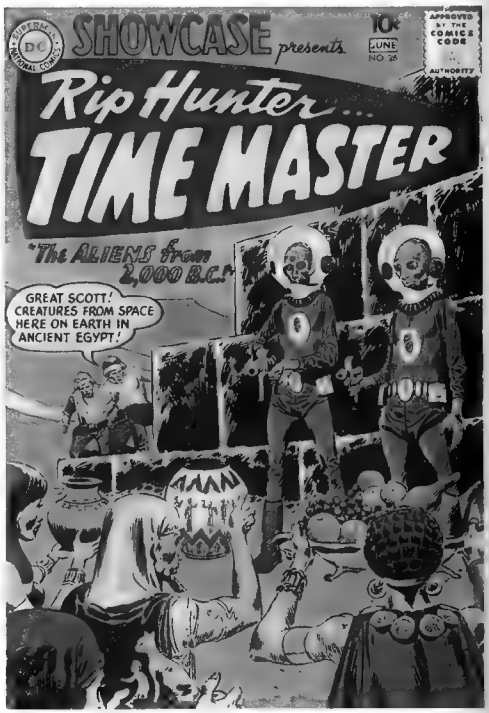
SC $37

Strange Adventures #114 (Mar 1960) Hey, at least US jets intercepted this tower-toppler. To call this image evocative is understatement. It's one of the great UFO covers.

Mystery In Space #58 (Mar 1960) Foolish mortal—gaze upon this cover and doubt not that early 1960 was the peak moment for Silver DC.

STRANGE ADVENTURES
10¢
NO WEAPON ON EARTH WAS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO STOP...
"The INVASION of the WATER-WARRIORS!"
A GIGANTIC, LIVING BLOB OF WATER—STREAMING THROUGH THE CITY!

Strange Adventures #116 (May 1960) This classic cover speaks for itself, as does the fact that this title produced three of our six alien menaces.


SHOWCASE presents
Rip Hunter...
TIME MASTER
"The ALIENS from 2,000 B.C.!"
GREAT SCOTT! CREATURES FROM SPACE HERE ON EARTH IN ANCIENT EGYPT!

Showcase #26 (Jun 1960) Joe Kubert drew the insides as well as the high concept cover, a 3-part novel with each chapter boasting a glorious full-page splash panel.

complex time travel yarn with more nice art by Sid Greene. Lastly, Star Hawkins (future detective) rounds out an awesome issue in "The Case of the Martian Witness," drawn by Mike Sekowsky.

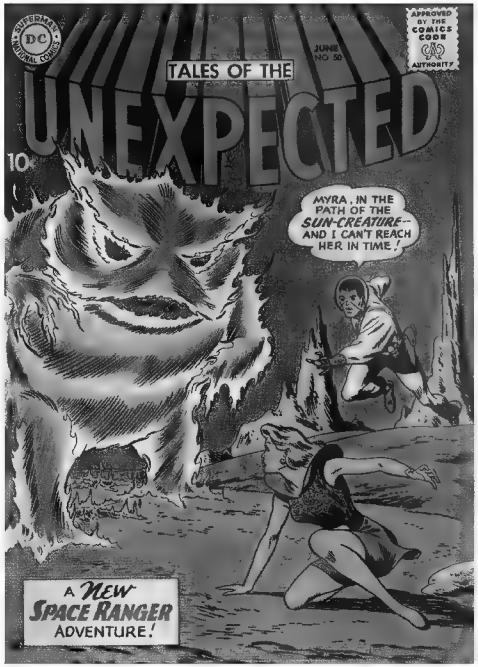
Julie's other classic DC SF title installed a continuing space hero series in late 1959, Adam Strange. *Mystery In Space* #58 (Mar 1960) wowed readers by using ancient Greek myths as alien menaces. Earthman Adam Strange teleported to the planet Rann every month, and on this visit he contends with the trio of Jupiter, Apollo, and Hercules—semi-immortal galactic roamers who had been on Earth a few millennia ago. It's a fascinating premise enhanced by Gil Kane's cover and Carmine Infantino's story art. Speaking of ops, there's "The Dancing Trees of Polaris Seven" where an Earth spy poses as an alien who plays a flute that makes his potted trees "shake it." And "The Amazing Journeys into Space" covers three interplanetary feats: the first landing on Mars, the first trip through the sun, and the first voyage around the universe, all attempted by one enthusiastic young chemist-engineer-astronaut (who must have read these books as a child!). Though all three efforts end in "failure" (at being first), it is because each time he rescues some other imperiled pioneer attempting the same journey. It's a thoughtful script with good Greene art.

Another liquid menace descended in *Strange Adventures* #116 (May 1960). Leading with a clean Kane cover, Heath draws the story inside where two scientists defeat the aqueous assault with the aid of one's pet Mynah and the other's pet fish! The Star Hawkins tale "stars" his mechanical secretary Ilda in "The Case of the Robot Spy."

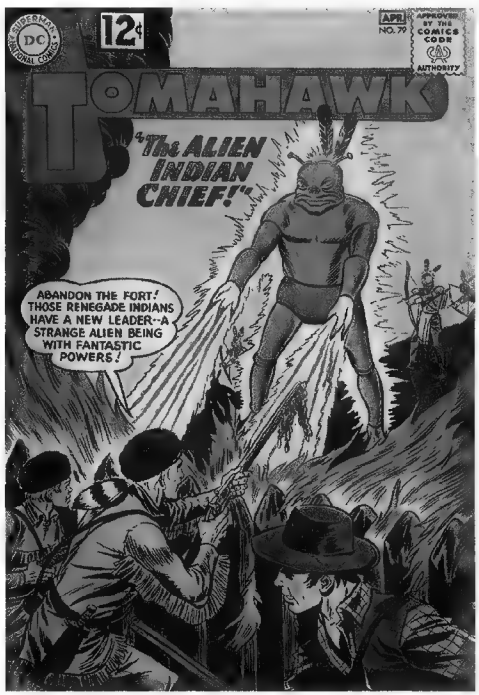
An appealing alien menace variant—having it happen 4000 years ago—made more DC magic in *Showcase* #26 (Jun 1960), the fourth and final Rip Hunter...Time Master "tryout" issue before winning his own title in 1961. That this fresh concept is fleshed out by a Joe Kubert masterwork yielded one of the best Silver DC covers. The novel inside develops the idea adequately if not spectacularly, and more Kubert art provides tasty visuals.

Space Ranger fought a fair share of alien monsters. Most often they were used as "distractions" by future crooks who looted during the chaos the creature caused. In *Tales of the Unexpected* #50 (Jun 1960) the formula plays out pretty well with the hero ferreting out the "Achilles' heel" of a seemingly invulnerable enemy that feeds on the energy of weapons used against it. Although hardcore DC fans usually rate the titles edited by Jack Shiff as second bananas to Julie's, this issue "rules" thanks to "King Barney the Ape," a quite charming fable of aliens versus ape, rendered by SF super-artist Murphy Anderson.

There's more could be said, but throwing in a "bonus cover," the aforementioned *Tomahawk* where the coonskin-capped freedom-fighters encounter "The Alien Indian Chief," says much of it, summing up the extent of the theme's "penetration" through DC's lineup. Jumping ahead two years to the dawn of the 12-cent era, *Tomahawk* #79 (Apr 1962) shows DC still at it, as the chief from elsewhere shoots out rays that melt Tomahawk's musket. The final words on DC's alien menace obsession must be: "Thank you, Mister Schwartz, for injecting such a big dose of SF into Silver Age DC. Your work is an immense addition to four-color fantasy."



Tales of the Unexpected #50 (Jun 1960) Myra Mason, Space Rangers comrade, and Adam Strange's raven-haired Alanna were the Betty and Veronica of Silver DC SF.


12¢
TOMAHAWK
"The ALIEN INDIAN CHIEF!"
ABANDON THE FORT! THOSE RENEGADE INDIANS HAVE A NEW LEADER--A STRANGE ALIEN BEING WITH FANTASTIC POWERS!

Tomahawk #79 (Apr 1962) It wouldn't be the first major event that stayed out of the history books... Each DC title featured an alien menace cover or two.

What has Fourteen Legs and is Lame?

This Selection of Silver Age Super-villains!

by Mark Squirek

Finding a lame super-villain during the Silver Age is as easy as A) making fun of a politician, B) shooting fish in a barrel, or C) falling off of a log. Like all three examples, it is a clichéd and downright unfair thing to do. With the market base for comics expanding so rapidly during this time, owners and publishers were crying for more product. This caused some really great editors and writers to leave their good judgment at the door in order to meet bone-crushing deadlines.

At least that is how it seems 40 years after the fact. I mean, nobody would intentionally publish a story about the Plantimal, ("Half-Plant, Half-Animal—and ALL MURDER" from the cover of *Blackhawk* #218), would they? Instead of providing a list of the names of lame super-villains so we can all laugh and feel superior, we thought that it might be better to examine a few lame villains in the context of an entire issue.

If you had told any of the people creating comics in 1964 that their work would be as minutely examined and dissected as a murder victim on *CSI Miami*, they would have simply scratched their heads and wandered off to the bar. To be fair, there were some people who seemed to be very aware of quality control, but even the best, like Julie Schwartz, Carmine Infantino and later Dick Giordano seem to have had the occasional slip. I really want to compliment Stan Lee, but in all good conscience, I can't. He let Ant-Man and The Wasp battle The Porcupine. As a matter of fact, he provided the plot for this sharp tale of scientific revenge.

Tales to Astonish #48 promises: "The Dreaded Porcupine, A Super-Villain you'll never forget!" He is a villain, and he is essentially super, but, on the cover, his costume looks like he is about to take part in an original samurai musical as staged by a well meaning local community theatre troop. It seems that the man who would be Porcupine has been devoting his life to government work. Feeling unappreciated and lonely, he plans to go into crime. He decides that he will base his career on the powers exhibited by Nature's perfect fighting machine, the porcupine.

Why should a villain who bases his powers on a porcupine be any less professional than a boy who bases his powers on a spider? It all comes down to the reader's ability to identify

SPECIAL FEATURE!
ANOTHER TALE FROM The COMBAT DIARY!
BLACKHAWK
IT'S THE PLANTIMAL... HALF-PLANT, HALF-ANIMAL-- AND ALL MURDER!
HA!...I TOLD YOU I'D GET US OUT OF THIS PRISON! HERE COMES HELP NOW!
SOME HELP! IS THAT THING HERE TO FREE US OR FEAST ON US?

TALES TO ASTONISH
48
THE ANT-MAN and The WASP BATTLE: PORCUPINE
ANT-MAN IS DROWNING, AND I'M POWERLESS TO SAVE HIM!
NO ONE THAT LIVES IS MIGHTY ENOUGH TO RESIST ME!

A FORTUNE!... MINE!... ALL MINE! AND THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING! THE PORCUPINE WILL LOOT THE TREASURE TROVES OF THE WORLD!
LADEN WITH HIS LOOT, THE PORCUPINE PRESSES ANOTHER BUTTON ON HIS BELT, ACTIVATING A GROUP OF POWER JETS THAT LIFT HIM HIGH OVER THE CITY!
BY THE TIME THEY AWAKE, I'LL BE SAFELY HOME!
CRASH!
WHOOSH!

JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
12¢
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
DEC. NO. 32
I'VE LOST MY SUPER-POWERS, HAWKMAN, BUT MY INVULNERABLE BODY WILL SHIELD YOU AGAINST THE ENERGY BLASTS OF BRAIN STORM!
FEATURING THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HEROES IN...
"ATTACK of the STAR-BOLT WARRIOR!"

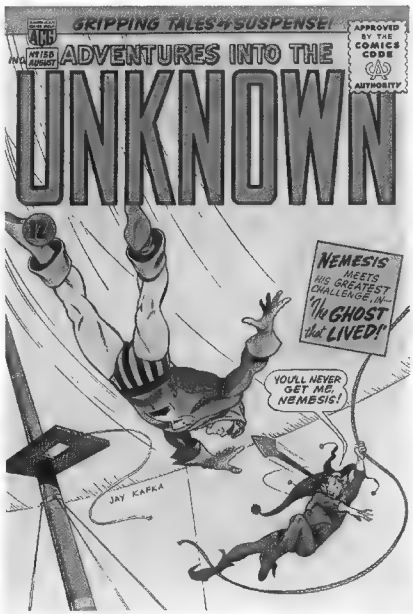
"I BUILT A HELMET OF THIS METALLIC COMPOUND TO TAP THESE RICH ENERGY SOURCES AT MY COMMAND...
"SINCE I WAS IN EFFECT A SUPER-BEING--SUCH AS YOURSELVES!--I DECIDED TO FASHION A UNIFORM FOR A VISIT...
EXCELLENT! NOW TO RUN A FIELD TEST IN MY NEW IDENTITY OF BRAIN STORM!

with the character. As a child, many of us watched in wonder a spider deftly construct a web. Very few children have spent their time watching a porcupine shoot quills at another wood-lawn creature. We have all sung "The teensy weensy spider climbed up the waterspout…" No one sings "Teensy weensy porcupine, watch his quills come out…"

Sometimes a villain is actually pretty good, but his costume takes him to another (lower) level. There has always been a problem with The Key. In theory, he is very solid. He wants to control others by dominating the chemicals in their brain. In *Justice League of America* #41, he dominates the cover. Standing there in his modified janitor's coveralls, he is gunning down Green Lantern while wearing the yoke of a yak. No matter how good the explanation is for his powers, he is chained to that ridiculous costume.

The early JLA had their share of great super-villains; Amazon, Kanjar-Ro and Dr. Destiny come to mind, but, like The Key, some good ideas went awry in execution. Brainstorm, the villain featured on the cover of #32, had a great idea. He could channel the untapped stellar energy much the same way Einstein suggested we tap atomic energy! The idea is fantastic; the problem was the helmet he needed to

SUPERMAN! FLASH! HAWKMAN! WONDER WOMAN! ATOM! GREEN LANTERN! JOHN JONZZ!
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
12¢
DEC. NO. 41
HE HAD THE KEY AND THE KNACK TO KNOCK OFF THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HEROES!


GRIPPING TALES of SUSPENSE!
ADVENTURES INTO THE UNKNOWN
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
NEMESIS MEETS HIS GREATEST CHALLENGE, IN--"The GHOST that LIVED!"
YOU'LL NEVER GET ME, NEMESIS!
JAY KAFKA

TENSE THRILLS--SHIVERS AND SHUDDERS--PULSE-POUNDING ACTION! THEY'RE RESERVED ESPECIALLY FOR YOU IN THE BREATHLESS NEMESIS ADVENTURE CALLED--
"THE GHOST THAT LIVED!"
STORY SHANE O'SHEA
ART: CHIC STONE

STRANGE TALES
104 JAN.
12¢
HUMAN TORCH BATTLES THE MOST FANTASTIC FOE OF ALL: PASTE-POT PETE AND HIS UNBEATABLE SUPER WEAPON!
IF ONE OF THOSE STREAMS OF FIRE-PROOF PASTE HITS ME, I'M A GONER!
MY PASTE-GUN WILL DEFEAT YOU, TORCH, AS IT HAS DEFEATED ALL THE OTHERS!

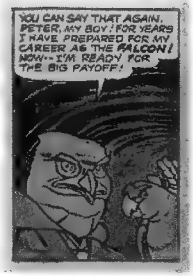
YOUR CRIME CAREER IS FINISHED, PETE! I'VE CORNERED YOU AT LAST!
SO! YOU THINK YOU DON'T NEED THE REST OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR, EH? YOU THINK YOU ALONE ARE A MATCH FOR ME?!!
WELL, YOU'RE ABOUT TO LEARN DIFFERENTLY, YOU BLAZING BRAT!

wear in order to tap that energy. If he is so damn smart, why didn't he build a more practical helmet? The best part of the whole story is when he stops to look in the mirror and smugly admires his costume.

Another form of lame-osity—er, lameness—is bearing a distinct resemblance to another, more famous, villain. For many, The Joker stands as the greatest comic villain ever. He is frightening in his insanity. In 1965, the folks at ACG needed a solid villain for a Nemesis story. They created a character named Jed Maroni, the man of a thousand faces. One of those faces seems to be a little too close to that of The Joker. From his pasty-face to the thinness of his physique, "Sunflower Sid" (one of Maroni's disguises), seems designed to deliberately make you think of The Joker. Of all the disguises that Maroni employs, he spends the most time inside this stylistic knock-off.

Sometimes, a villain appears who just shocks you with his powers. Paste-Pot Pete shocks you, but for all the wrong reasons. He first appears in *Strange Tales* #104 as The Human Torch is making a deposit at a local back. Paste-Pot Pete stands there at the entrance of the bank, threatening every customer with his pencil thin mustache, jutting jaw and his purple beret. By his side hangs the most threatening substance ever devised by man, a bucket of paste. Many a third grader has feared death after accidentally eating paste. Paste-Pot Pete hopes to instill that same fear in every one of the bank's loyal customers.

The story never gives Pete an origin, (that would come later when Pete becomes The Trapster), but he does manage to confound and battle The Human Torch for 11 pages. The Torch finally decides that if he heats up the paste bucket that Pete is carrying, Pete would have to drop it! Finally, victory is in The Torch's grasp. At the very last minute, and thanks to the strength of his paste, Pete is able to hitch one last ride along a passing jet plane,



thereby escaping capture. That's some powerful paste!

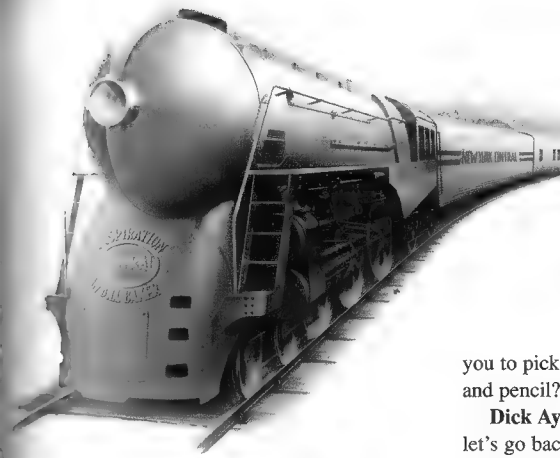
Sometimes, the quality of a comic book can vary wildly between two different stories. *Detective Comics* #265 is noted among collectors as a key Silver Age issue. It contains a powerful retelling of Batman's origin while adding some new facts to the already established mythology. The story focuses on the revenge plans being made by the very first criminal Batman put away. It is a great piece of comic book storytelling. After such a solid story, the book takes a sudden left turn with the back up story featuring J'onn J'onzz, Manhunter from Mars.

It seems that a man in a brown suit with a brown cape and the head of a large bird is robbing bird-themed events. At one point, he confounds the easily befuddled local police by throwing bird feathers in order to blind them. When the robberies are finished, the Falcon returns to Hawk Mountain and the company of his friend Pete the Parrot. Pete is your typical sycophantic bird. As soon as the Falcon returns with the spoils of the robbery, Pete says that "Caw, Falcon the Greatest of all that can fly!"

The Falcon can fly because he has a Falcon-Plane.

Needless to say, J'onn infiltrates Hawk Mountain, a fire breaks out and the man in the brown suit with the brown cape and the head of a large bird is caught. He ends up sitting in a jail cell cradling his large bird mask in his lap. The police obviously fear his reaction if they attempt to take his large bird mask from him. As long as he is not wearing it, everything is okay.

The Silver Age had many memorable moments, and just as many not so memorable. Just remember, one man's Joker is another man's Sunflower Sid.



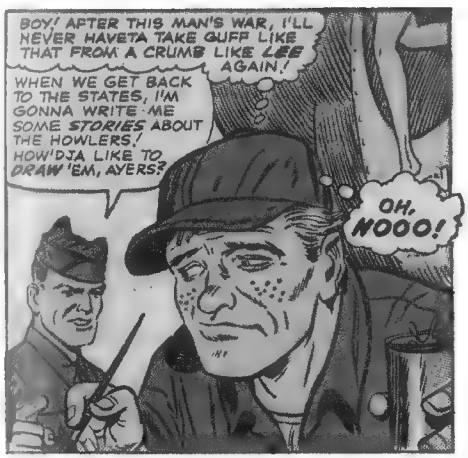
Inks, Colors, Action!: Dick Ayers on His Influences and Inspirations

The venerable Dick Ayers is rightly revered for his work on a large fistful of comic book series he's worked on over the past five decades or so. Whether it's the western thrills offered by The Haunted Horseman *or* Ghost Rider, *the rough and tumble battles depicted in* Sgt. Fury and His Howling Commandos, *or any one of the other genres he's distinguished himself in, Ayers' dynamic depiction of the characters, combined with a skillful depiction of their emotional reactions to the action, has attracted a legion of staunch fans.*

Yet even his most ardent of admirers might be surprised by some of the folks and art forms that have charged this artist's creative batteries and influenced his development over the years.

Comic Book Marketplace: Who were some of the people who inspired you to pick up pen and pencil?

Dick Ayers: Oh, let's go back even before that. I remember my father reading me what was then *The Newlyweds*, which then became *Bringing Up Father*, and *The Little King*. And then came Popeye. Now I'm getting older, I can read by myself. Popeye I really thought was my favorite at the time. I was about nine years old, and I think it was called *Thimble Theater*. And then I graduated. Along came *Wash Tubbs* and *Captain Easy* by Roy Crane, and he's still my favorite. I just like Roy Crane because he had an ability to tell an adventure story, plus have some humor, so you could have both combined. And then, one Sunday morning, came *Flash Gordon* by Alex Raymond, and then came *Prince Valiant*.


BOY! AFTER THIS MAN'S WAR, I'LL NEVER HAVETA TAKE GUFF LIKE THAT FROM A CRUMB LIKE LEE AGAIN!
WHEN WE GET BACK TO THE STATES, I'M GONNA WRITE ME SOME STORIES ABOUT THE HOWLERS! HOW'DJA LIKE TO DRAW 'EM, AYERS?
OH, NOOO!

Oh, then I really became a collector, and also an imitator or copier, the type of thing kids do, and started telling stories. So, then along the way all the strip artists, like Burne Hogarth, [influenced me]. I never was one much to focus on illustrators, because I was more into stories, and I always wanted that continuity. In fact, at one point in high school, in my senior year, my English teacher approached my mother and said, "For heaven's sake, will you get Dick away from the drawing? He's a writer. All you have to do is give him a word, and he can write 500 words!" But that didn't work, because I wanted the pictures combined with the stories.

CBM: Who were some of your influences as far as your writing?

Ayers: Writing? I don't know. I started with the typical boy's stuff. Robert Louis Stevenson, and…; I can't remember all the authors, I just remember reading every book that I got my hands on.

Well, then *Argosy* magazine was a *big* favorite, and that's where I saw a lot of writers that later became famous. The guy that wrote *Dr. Kildare*, Max Brand. C. S. Forester, that wrote all the Horatio Hornblower stories. So it was that type of writer who captured my imagination.

CBM: Again, more the adventure oriented stuff, then.

Ayers: Yes, all adventure. For some reason I always wanted to put a little

[continued on page 80]

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE... VILLAIN!

"MEET... DOCTOR DOOM!"

by Dan Johnson

It has been my experience as a comic book fan that some super-heroes take a long time to realize their potential as interesting characters. Meanwhile, other super-heroes never take off at all. The main thing that can really hamper even the best concept for a super-hero is that a leading character may lack interesting adversaries to face off with. For example, Daredevil, while considered a very engaging character today (thanks in part to the guiding hands of creators like Frank Miller, Kevin Smith and Brian Michael Bendis), languished for years because he did not have defining enemies to make him a truly great hero (they would only come when Frank Miller turned Bullseye into hornhead's archenemy and borrowed the Kingpin from the Spider-Man books and started having the rotund crime boss butt heads with the man without fear). On the other hand, I personally never thought the Silver Age Green Lantern came across as strong as he could have, despite some of Gil Kane's best artwork ever, mainly because he lacked a stable of note-worthy enemies to challenge him on a regular basis (with the notable exception of the fallen Green Lantern, Sinestro). At the other end of the spectrum though, a character like Batman, while exciting and dynamic on his own, really soars because of the varied bag of psychotic fiends he contends with, such as the Joker or Two-Face. Don't believe me? Check out the Dark Knight's adventures in the 1950s when the denizens of Arkum Asylum were shuffled out of the way to give center stage to aliens and otherworldly threats in the Batman comics. Also check out the adventures of the Silver Age Flash, many of which still hold up well today because of the colorful Rogue's Gallery consisting of Captain Cold, Mirror Master and Captain Boomerang that were created to bedevil the Scarlet Speedster.

Dr. Doom almost had his own book (Aug 71).

With the release of *Fantastic Four #1* in 1961, Stan Lee and Jack Kirby set new standards for super-heroes. From the very beginning, the exploits of Mr. Fantastic, the Invisible Girl, the Thing and the Human Torch were fresh and exciting compared to the tamer adventures that DC Comics put their super-heroes through. Also, the characters bickered and fought with one another almost as much as they did the bad guys they went up against. The characters weren't just a team of super-heroes, they were a *family* of super-heroes with all the same problems that any family would have. Issue after issue of the magazine helped to forge and refine the template that would determine how Lee and the artists that he worked with would handle the new breed of super-heroes that were about to make the struggling company that had once been Timely Comics into Marvel Comics, one of the most powerful outfits in the industry.

Now, as we just said, truly great heroes require truly great villains to challenge them. Also, super-heroes that were bringing an unheard-of sense of realism to comics would also need villains that were just as believable and engaging as they were. When it came to the amazing quartet that Lee and Kirby created, this team really started to test their mettle when they found their arch nemesis: Dr. Doom.

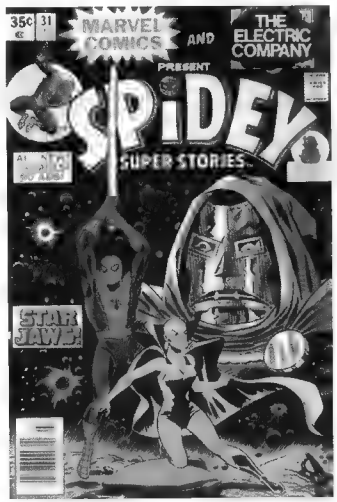
In their early adventures, the Fantastic Four faced off with the likes of the Mole Man and the beasts that were found in his domain, Monster Isle (*Fantastic Four #1*); the shape-shifting Skrulls (*Fantastic Four #2*), and the hypnotist, the Miracle Man (*Fantastic Four #3*). All of these foes were okay enemies (granted, the Skrulls got much better as more information about them was presented). For the most part though, these characters were just a cut above the creations that might be found in one of Lee and Kirby's science fiction monster comics, like *Journey into Mystery* or *Tales of Suspense* (one notable exception to the Fantastic Four's early drought of worthy challengers was in issue 4, which marked the introduction of the Sub-Mariner to Marvel's Silver Age). But the Fantastic Four finally met their match in their fifth issue when Victor Von Doom, better known to several generations of readers as Dr. Doom, made his first appearance. Ever since that historic introduction, Dr. Doom has set the standard for the rest of the Fantastic

SEE CLASSIC DR. DOOM COVERS IN THE COLOR SECTION

Four's enemies and he has led the pack as Marvel's number one villain. Indeed, there are very few heroes in Marvel's stable who have not crossed swords with Doom.

The story that presented Dr. Doom to readers recounted briefly how a young Victor Von Doom and a young Reed Richards had attended college together (in later stories, it was shown that right from the beginning Von Doom didn't care for Richards, despite Reed's efforts to get to know the young Von Doom). Victor Von Doom was a loner who jealously guarded his research and his forbidden experiments at State University up until the day his attempt to cross science with black magic literally blew up in his face. The accident left him disfigured and also expelled from school. The first Dr. Doom story had him holding Sue Storm hostage and sending Reed, Ben Grimm and Johnny Storm into the past to hijack the Blackbeard's treasure chest. Later, in what was to become true Dr. Doom fashion, only after he has what he thinks is the treasure of Blackbeard, does Doom reveal that it was made up of gems that once belonged to Merlin, and which were given mystic properties by the wizard. Also in what is to become true Dr. Doom fashion, he is tricked for the first time by Reed Richards. After all, the boys of the F.F. keep their word to Doom and they bring back Blackbeard's treasure chest and deliver it to Doom as promised, but they left the gems inside of it in the distant past. When the Fantastic Four attempt to capture Dr. Doom, this first story ends with his escaping from them. This clever escape helped to paint Doom as the master of misdirection when it came to using deceptions, half-truths or any number of his robot doubles to fool his enemies and keep them off balance.

This story also set up several other standard trademarks for the good doctor right from the get-go. First of all, there was Doom's genius, which has always been rivaled only by Reed Richards (face it, anyone who can build a time platform like Doom did in this issue certainly deserves the Mr. Wizard award). Also on display in this issue is Doom's ego, which would never concede that any man was his better or that anyone could ever be capable of deceiving Doom (which was something he often set out to do with other people). One of the most famous aspects about Dr. Doom that isn't really obvious in the first couple of stories with him, but which surely developed because of his colossal ego and these early encounters with the Fantastic Four, was the hatred that he had of Reed Richards (I really first noticed this being explored in *Fantastic Four* #10). The character would, in time, develop a disdain for Richards because Mr. Fantastic was one of the few men alive who could match Doom's intellect, although Doom would never admit that himself. As later stories explored, Dr. Doom was sure that Mr. Fantastic was jealous of his genius, so much so that he became convinced Reed Richards had sabotaged his experiment to reach the nether world which had left Doom disfigured and disgraced (perhaps it was easier to live with that than have to admit he was wrong and what happened to him was his own fault). That sense of self-denial seems to be at the core of what Dr. Doom is. Time and time again, Doom has faced the Fantastic Four and while he was defeated, the F.F. were never able to capture him. Most villains would have been content with the fact that they had escaped to fight another day. That was never the case with Dr. Doom. While the F.F. saw the outcome of their encounters with Dr. Doom as ending in stalemate after stalemate, Doom saw the constant thwarting of his plans as humiliations by his sworn enemy and his extended family. Each defeat became one more reason for Doom to hasten their demise and why he felt that when the Fantastic Four were finally destroyed, their defeat had to come at his hands and no one else's.



"Easy to read" (Feb 81).

Even though Doom wanted the destruction of the Fantastic Four to be his victory alone, he has never been above using the hatred of the team by others to his own end. Dr. Doom's second appearance came in the very next issue of *Fantastic Four*, issue 6. There, Doom teamed up with Prince Namor, the Sub-Mariner in a plot to send the Baxter Building into space. The fact that Namor was to be trapped in space along with the Fantastic Four was of no concern to Doom. After all, the Sub-Mariner was just a pawn to be used by Doom and then disposed of when his usefulness was gone. This issue showed that when it came to Dr. Doom, alliances were fleeting at best and any who entered into a partnership with him were best warned to watch their backs at all times. That was why it was lucky for Spider-Man that he rebuked Doom when he tried to enlist the web-head as another of his dupes whom he wanted to set loose on the FF in *The Amazing Spider-Man* #5.

A canny cross-over (May 81).

Besides his ruthlessness, Dr. Doom's plots to destroy the Fantastic Four also helped to place him well ahead of the pack of the team's varied and colorful foes. Even during his first appearance, Doom's schemes have always been ingenious, be it taking Mr. Fantastic's place by switching bodies with his

[continued on page 63]

Black and white art from **Cosmic Guard.**

Changing of the Guard

Jim Starlin on "Thanos" and "The Cosmic Guard"

Interview conducted by Bill Baker

Since he was first introduced thirty-one years ago, the legend and importance of Thanos has grown until he's become arguably one of the most powerful and important villains populating the Marvel Universe. In the past Thanos has regularly gone toe-to-toe with a who's who of heroes, beings cosmic powered and god-like, and beaten them singly and en masse. Even more recently, the dark titan fought that most terrible of beings, the devourer of worlds himself—Galactus—to a standstill in the opening arc of his eponymous series. All this and more he's done by way of service to his avowed mistress, Death, in whose name he has nearly destroyed the House that Jack and Stan built many times over.

And still he is not satisfied.

Neither is Jim Starlin, the man who—as the progenitor of Thanos, and the source of many of that foul demigod's most memorable and heinous campaigns—bears full responsibility for his four color offspring's rampages. However, that protean creator has but recently escaped the confines of the Marvel Universe and is now prepared to explore the virgin vistas of a freshly minted universe of his own, eager to plumb the reaches of pain and wonder never before experienced in this or any other world.

And best of all, he's invited us all to accompany him on his voyage of discovery.

CBM: What is it about Thanos that keeps drawing you back?

Jim Starlin: Well, actually I created him about the time that I'd just got out of the service. I took a psych class in college, and the whole Thanos/Eros thing sort of fascinated me. When I came up to Marvel and started doing work for them, one of the first jobs I did for them was *Iron Man*, after a couple of short horror and love stories. Mike Friedrich, who was the writer of it, had no idea what to do with it, because we were just supposed to be doing a fill-in or two, and so I said, "Well, I've got this idea," and Thanos was born.

Whenever I come back to Marvel, it's not to come back to do Warlock, or Silver Surfer, or Captain Marvel. It's always been, "Well, how can I do something with Thanos again?" He's just so dark and so revoltingly ugly, how could you not love him?

CBM: Does he allow you to tell some stories that you might not be able to tell otherwise, or perhaps in quite the same way you'd like to?

Starlin: Well, I think we all have a dark side to ourselves. And I'm a fairly quiet, not evil individual myself, so this gives me a chance to work out a lot of things. [Laughter]

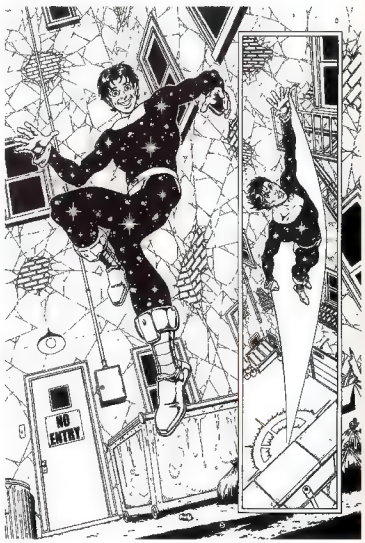
CBM: Now, when he first appeared in *Iron Man*, if memory serves, it was more of a walk on than as a featured player. Was he a fully fleshed-out character at that point, or did he develop and grow over time?

Starlin: When I actually put him together, he was much thinner. I knew I wanted to do more with him. I didn't have the whole Captain Marvel story set up; in fact, I didn't even know I was going to be doing *Captain Marvel*. He was there to act as a foil for Drax. I actually thought that I was going to do more with Drax the Destroyer than I did with Thanos, but as it went along Thanos became, obviously, a much more interesting character to work on.

CBM: So he just grew organically as a character, then?

Starlin: Yeah, sometimes from outside influences. Kirby had gone over to DC, and Roy Thomas, who was then editor, said, "Well, if we're going to do this *Captain Marvel*, we're going to go against Jack's *New Gods*. So bulk up Thanos even more than he is." As a result, the two of them have always been compared to each other. Though other than their size, they don't have a lot in common—except for the fact that they both have bad attitudes.

CBM: One of your stories that featured Thanos and made a really big



impression on me was the first Cosmic Cube quest, and which crossed over a number of titles and annuals. Where'd that story come from, and how difficult was it to convince them to do that kind of cross-over?

Starlin: Well, I had quit Marvel when they had discontinued Warlock, and so there were a lot of things that had been left over with Warlock and Thanos. I went outside of comics. I was working in animation for about a year, and then I came back and…I don't remember. It was Archie Goodwin, I think, who was the editor that asked if I wanted to do one of their annuals. I said, "OK, but I want to be able to finish off some of the stuff I'd left behind and never got done." And he said, "Sure, go ahead!"

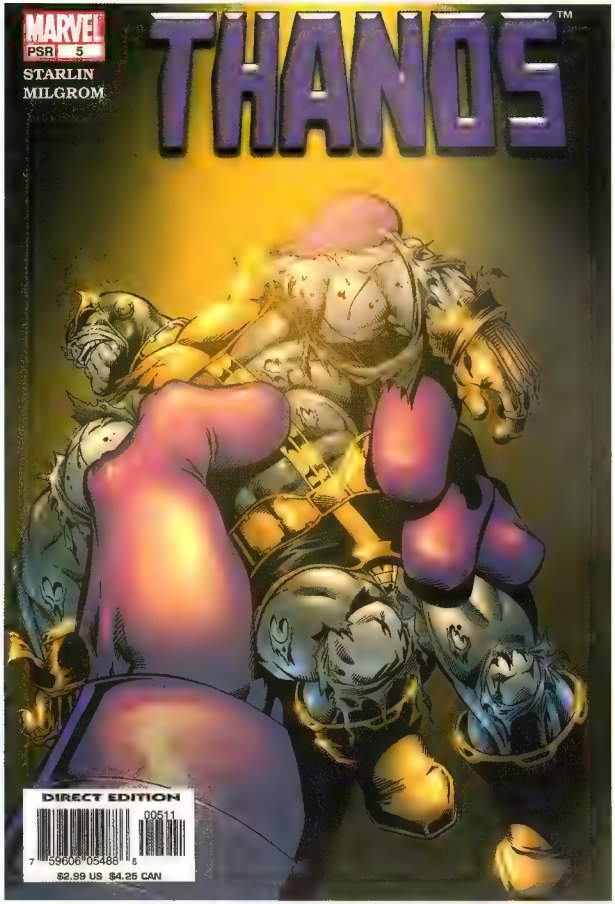
The Avengers Annual [#7] was the first part, and I got it done in record time. I brought it in, and I knew I wanted to do still more stuff with Thanos and Warlock, and they said, "Well, you want to do the *Marvel Two-in-One Annual* [#2] also? We haven't got anyone on that." So, I went off and did that. I don't think I even talked to anybody about a plot. Back then, you know, they figured, "Well, we've just got to fill in the book!" [Laughter]

CBM: Were you basically flying by the seat of your pants for most of that, then?

Starlin: It was partly that. The fun part about it was the fact that you didn't have to plot everything out so laboriously, as you do these days. When I started up the Warlock series, I came in and talked to Roy Thomas, the editor there that afternoon, and he said, "Which character would you like to do?" I said, "Warlock," and that night I went home and I started drawing it.

Now, they want to see all these issues down in plots, and then they have to add their two cents to it. Basically, they pound the life out of it [by forcing it] into some kind of mold before you even get started. Makes it a little bit tough to be spontaneous. [General laughter]

Thanos #5 cover.



CBM: Right. How have you managed to keep yourself interested in doing these stories today, and how do you manage to keep some kind of life, some original spark in the work these days?

Starlin: Well, I found that I couldn't do it at Marvel anymore. That's why I quit [*Thanos*]. I was having to sneak the actual story around what I wanted to do. I was going to quit working for Marvel at the end of *The End of the Marvel Universe* miniseries. I had this deal for *The Cosmic Guard*, which is the new book I'm working on, fall through with CrossGen. CrossGen was originally supposed to print it but, as I'm sure you're aware, they're in terrible financial shape now, so that deal sort of died. So I did the *Thanos* series in the meantime.

Basically, what I wanted to do with the Thanos series was write a story that had some similarities between what was going on with our own country's unilateral actions concerning certain things, like Iraq, and I had to sneak that in around the editors, because they would have killed it. As a result, I slipped it in and then alerted people on the website [**www.Starlin.com**] to take a look at the American flag behind Galactus, and they could figure out who represented what at that point.

CBM: What do you think has lead to this kind of situation, this kind of freezing up and shying away from all kinds of topics and creativity on the parts of editors and publishers? Is it political correctness, perhaps a real fear of going too far, or do you think it's something else?

Starlin: It is political correctness. In the middle of the *Thanos* series they made us remove all of Pip the Troll's cigars because, I guess, [Joe] Quesada decided that Marvel would be a no smoking outfit. Whether it's good guys, bad guys, no one smokes in the Marvel Universe. And that sort of struck me as stupid.

CBM: Does that kind of atmosphere have other adverse effects on you as a creator? For instance, does it tend to shut down the whole creative impulse at that point?

Never mind.
Yet another question.
Why has Galactus sent his cyborg thralls after me?
Yes, they are very powerful.
And quick and merciless.
But against me...
they are nothing!

Thanos #4 interior page.

Starlin: Well, if you come up with a better idea as you go along, you either have to sneak it in or go back and rework it through the whole process. And the process takes months, so you don't ever go back and try to do that. You don't say that, "Oh, I see! This would be a much better story if I went down Road B rather than Road A." But, in order to do that, you have to go back to the committee, and at that point, you might as well give up on trying to get the book out on any kind of timely schedule.

CBM: Earlier, you mentioned that you were able to sit down and start drawing the first issue of the first Warlock story on the evening of the same day as you got that assignment. Was it literally that free and easy for you, that you just sat down and started drawing it, or did you do a little planning or plotting out of the story, first?

Starlin: You have to realize that, back then, there was one editor in charge of the entire line. Marvel had gone from something like eight books a month to close to sixty. And so there was nobody to keep track of what was going on. The editor and his assistants at that point, they were basically proofreaders for the most part. If they spent any time working with a writer on his plots and that, it was on books that weren't selling well, or they were trying to get better.

They gave me *Captain Marvel* because, quite frankly, it was going to go down the tubes. They said, "Do whatever you want. We've got a few issues of this before it goes out," and they were very surprised when the thing sold. Also, when we started up *Warlock*, I think Roy was the editor of the first one; after that, by the time *Warlock* was done, I'd had three editors on that book. Gerry Conway was the last one. Marv Wolfman and Len Wein were also editors on that book.

CBM: I'd imagine that you'd need some real idea of what you want to do with the book when you're being handed off like that.

Starlin: Well, I was twenty-one or twenty-two at that time, and I had a lot of energy, and I appreciated the fact that they couldn't keep track of what I was doing. [General laughter]

CBM: How did you create comics back then? Did you literally sit down with just a general idea or rough plot in your head and start drawing, or was it more methodical than that?

Starlin: Oh, I would always sit down with a notebook, or three-by-five cards, and do thumbnails of the pages. The stories always came very easily; it's just breaking it down into visuals that required some work. I actually have to work at it much harder these days; I do up small thumbnails, and then I do actual thumbnails of the drawings, and then blow them up on a Xerox machine to trace off on the actual original art page. [Laughter] Then I scan it and, the majority of the time, I actually do some more work on the pages after they've been scanned and are on the actual computer. So it's a lot more work these days than it was back in the old days.

CBM: Is that because of the tightening of the editorial reigns affecting the storytelling, or is it more your inclination these days?

Starlin: That was [due to] me wanting to draw better, mostly. That's where most of the work is. You go back and look at the old *Captain Marvel*s, they had a lot of energy, but there are some pretty awful drawings there. I think they had about thirty-six ribs on each side. [Laughter] Only after I took some anatomy classes did I realize that, "A real human figure doesn't look anything like what I'm drawing." I'm still trying to stay representational, rather than do any kind of photorealistic view of it, but I want the proportions to be right, and improve on what I'm doing.

CBM: How about storytelling? Do you have to work at that, or does it just seem to come naturally?

Starlin: It's pretty natural, I'd have to say. I hesitated there for a moment because it's not something I put a lot into. I mean, the stories are going on in my head and I can figure what it should look like because of all the years that I've sat there and watched movies and that. I've got my ideas. The storytelling part of it goes fairly easily. It's the visual part—making an actual picture—that takes a little more time.

CBM: Is that work on the visual honing the visual in your head, or just getting it down right?

Starlin: Honing the ability to get what I see in my head out there, down on the paper, yeah. That's what it comes down to.

Plus, over the years, my art style has changed, and the style of comics in general [have also changed]. This thing I'm working on now, *The Cosmic Guard*, I'm inking also. So that I've had to rethink things, especially in the way I pencil a page, because I know what I want down there, and I don't have to put it down so tightly in the pencils for somebody else to come along and ink. Usually when I'm penciling for somebody else, I get about a page a day out. This morning, I penciled out two pages, and I've pretty well inked half of one of the pages. So it's a different process, a different speed.

One cannot allow oneself to be carried completely away with this doing the right thing fatuousness.
There must always be limits.
THE END
Last page of **Thanos** #6—Starlin's last word on Thanos.

CBM: Has inking yourself changed the look of the final page?

Starlin: More so than I would have thought. *The Cosmic Guard* stuff looks quite a bit different than when Milgrom was inking it. For one thing, Alan works with a big brush, has a much more definite solid line than I do. My inking tends to be with a marker and it's blockier, but with a thinner line at the same time.

CBM: What about your spotting of blacks and such, has that changed at all?

Starlin: I'm probably putting more blacks down because when I'm doing the pencils, there's so much constructing the figure that, a lot of times, you'll lose the blacks.

I have a digital camera now, and if there's any lighting effect [I want to capture] I can just shoot myself or somebody else and print it off in black and white on the computer here, and I've got a great piece of reference that I wouldn't have had a decade ago. And so, as a result, there are more blacks when I'm inking myself than there would be if I was sending them off to Milgrom or somebody else.

CBM: It really is interesting to take a look at differences between people's pages when they ink themselves and when they've been inked by others. Sometimes the differences are really surprising.

Starlin: Some people more so than others. When John Buscema used to ink himself, he'd say he was the best person to ink himself. And I'd tend to agree with him, but I didn't think that it would look all that much different than say a number of other inkers, other than their particular style. I could think of a number of inkers that looked very similar to John when they were inking his work.

CBM: Why don't we talk a little bit about the new book, *The Cosmic Guard*, starting with what it's about and when we can expect to see it?

Starlin: It'll be coming out in July. It's a six issue mini-series to start off with. It's about a twelve-year-old orphan named Ray Torres. At the beginning of this story, he's on top of the roof at the orphanage about to throw himself off because he just can't stand being in the system anymore. But he makes the mistake of looking up into the night sky, and he notices this one star glimmering, and the next thing you know, we're on this world where that star is its sun. And it's the end of this alien struggle against this group called the Genociders, and the chief warrior fighting the Genociders is somebody called the Dark Paladin. He says, "Well, we've lost. It's time for me to pass on the Gift, to pass on the legacy." So the powers that are his are passed on, through some quasi-mystic way, to young Ray Torres, and he becomes the new defender, the new protector of the universe against these menacing Genociders characters. And from there, it gets a little weird. [Laughter]

CBM: Obviously, there's much more to the story than that.

[continued on page 65]

In Praise of Gre

A Retrospective by Bill Baker

Charged with the task of naming the more important historical events in the four color world of a decade past, different fans and observers of the ever changing comics scene could easily point to a wide variety of benchmarks. Some would mark the formation of Image comics, seeing it as the apotheosis of the independent comics movement begun by innumerable mainstream and underground creators of decades past. Others might point to the boom and inevitable bust of the speculator-fueled bubble, which saw not only the implosion of sales, but a severe winnowing of comic shops, distributors and publishers across the country. And then there's always the appearance of any number of imprints—from Matt Groening's Bongo to DC Comics' Vertigo, Jeff Smith's Cartoon Books and Bill Tucci's Crusade to Terry Moore's Abstract Studios and many more—which have all gone on to reap not only critical raves and

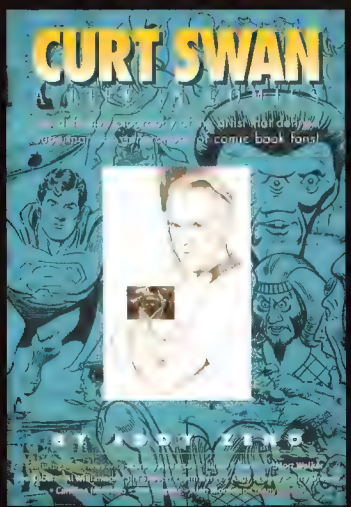
AT MEN

J. David Spurlock and a Decade of Vanguard Productions

financial success, but also helped to further extend the range and audience of contemporary comics.

However, for both the literal-minded and those who—like regular readers of this magazine—truly value the rich and varied contributions of those artists who toiled during comic's various ages past, the founding of Vanguard Productions in 1993 would surely be highly ranked, if not at the very top of any hypothetical historical listing. And they'd be in good company. In fact, Julie Schwartz himself has observed that, "Just as I served as the vanguard of the Silver Age of Comics, J. David Spurlock's line of books serve as the vanguard of Silver Age comics histories." Quite simply, one would be hard pressed to find another still-active publishing house which has done more to preserve and promote the artistry and accomplishments of those good people who literally drew up the blueprints and then built the foundations of that vital, fondly remembered era.

All of which could seem somewhat ironic, given that the imprint was initially established to launch an anthology of new and cutting edge work called, appropriately enough, *Edge*. Still, when asked how the mission of Vanguard has changed over the last ten years as its primary output shifted from fiction towards the factual, publisher J. David Spurlock insists that, "The vision hasn't changed much. We started with the *Edge* anthology, moved to art books and biographies. We've added graphic novels—our latest being *Neal Adams*



What people are saying about Vanguard...

Captain America Creator on Vanguard's artist retrospectives

"Vanguard's books are among the best in the business. Thank you David Spurlock and Vanguard Productions for the passion and craftsmanship you put into your books."

– Joe Simon

Neal Adams on Vanguard's comics artist retrospectives

"Vanguard books are aptly named. Vanguard represents and is the prideful expression of an art form whose injection into film, television, galleries and museums is only just beginning. With Vanguard we will get to finally reexamine this once-disposable medium. I have looked for this development for a very long time."

– Neal Adams

Gene Colan on Vanguard and Publisher, J. David Spurlock

"David Spurlock's Vanguard work is A #1. Moreover, he's a real pro in every sense of the word –responsible, dedicated, loyal. The Spider book (we worked on) is sensational. The art and Vanguard's work both really shine."

– Gene Colan

Carmine Infantino on Vanguard Publisher, J. David Spurlock

"Joe Orlando introduced me to David Spurlock years ago. Joey was very excited about his latest find and wanted David in a key position at Mad or DC. I have worked with Dave on a number of projects and I'm as impressed with him as Joey was. David is one of the best men I've ever worked with. Not only does he have my highest support and recommendation as a professional, I also consider him a close personal friend."

– CARMINE INFANTINO, DC Comics Publisher & President Emeritus

Julius Schwartz on Vanguard books

"Vanguard is the leading publisher of comics histories, art books, and biographies. I've been happy to contribute to Vanguard's volumes on two of my long-time associates: Curt Swan and Carmine Infantino. I often appear at conventions in support of Vanguard's fine line of books which deserve a long and prosperous life in comic shops and bookstores alike."

'Just as I served as the vanguard of the Silver Age of Comics, J. David Spurlock's line of books serve as the vanguard of Silver Age comics histories.'

– Julius Schwartz, DC Comics "Father of the Silver Age"

Stan Lee on Vanguard books

'J. David Spurlock's Vanguard books are really great looking. Vanguard's John Romita Sketchbook is more than a book of drawings. It's a testament to the awesome talent of one of the most brilliant visual storytellers of our time.'

'Fans all over the world have acclaimed Gene Colan as one of the artistic giants of the Marvel Comics bullpen. Gene's spectacular illustrations on Vanguard's new book The Spider is as awesome and beautifully drawn as anything Gene has done in the past—and take it from me, that's high praise indeed! Excelsior!"

– Stan Lee

Jim Steranko on Vanguard

"Vanguard's Popular Artist Sketchbook Series may be the most significant in the history of comics."

– Jim Steranko

Will Eisner on Vanguard

"...a very impressive publishing line. Certainly, these books deserve attention and inclusion in any overview of comic history."

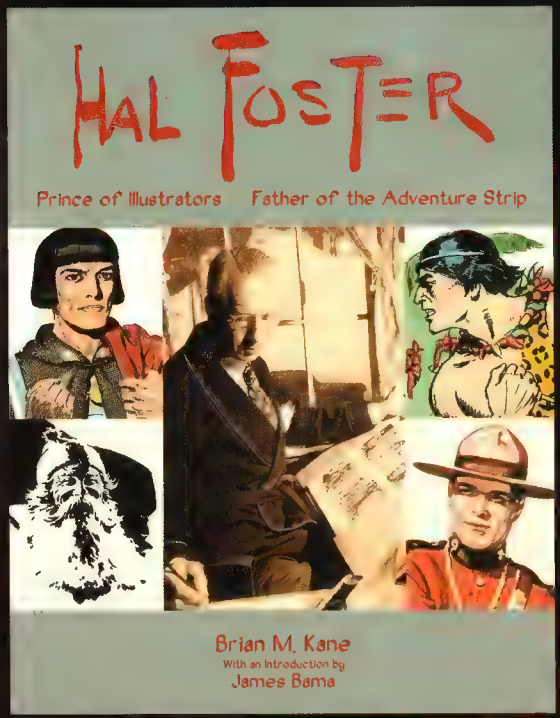
– Will Eisner

Monsters—and we hope to expand into DVDs."

Speaking of the implied threat of newer technologies eroding or even supplanting the sales of traditional media, a specter which typically strikes a deep and fearful chord in the hearts of so many other publishers, gives Spurlock little pause. That's because, as he explains with no little conviction. "One gets a special pleasure out of holding beautiful things. Comics and art books have tactile and accessible qualities you don't get with other mediums. We create our books with that in mind. Often a collector will know that our subjects are long overdue for the "Vanguard" treatment. Other times they may discover the work of a genius they had overlooked before. I get an extra thrill by being able to bring fans those experiences."

Quizzed about what else helps to keep him interested and engaged as a publisher, Spurlock doesn't hesitate for an instant. "We're in the business of honoring creators. The fun is honoring them. The business is trying to sell enough books that we can go on to honor other creators. I hope we can continue to please and entertain fans and honor creators for a long, long time." Of course, there's also the bonus that his role as publisher provides him with ample opportunities to interact with those same creators who have had a real and lasting impact on his life, both professionally and personally. Or, as he puts it, "By forming Vanguard I have created an opportunity to work with many of the talents that inspired me to first go into illustration and on to publishing."

Asked to identify which particular aspect of comics first excited him, and what about the medium keeps his interest.



his enthusiastic reply is, "Everything! The color, action, adventure, craftsmanship that went into them." After a short pause, he adds with real passion that, "I've always felt the unique medium known as comics deserved more attention and exploration."

If there are any duties associated with his job which he doesn't eagerly anticipate, those would be, "Contract negotiations, deadlines, legal issues, accounting, not being able to do all the books we'd like to." In other words, Spurlock notes ruefully, "The things that make this like other businesses." There's a small shrug as he observes somewhat philosophically, "Every project has rewards and stresses."

Top row: J. David Spurlock and John Romita. Bottom row: John Buscema and Gene Colan.

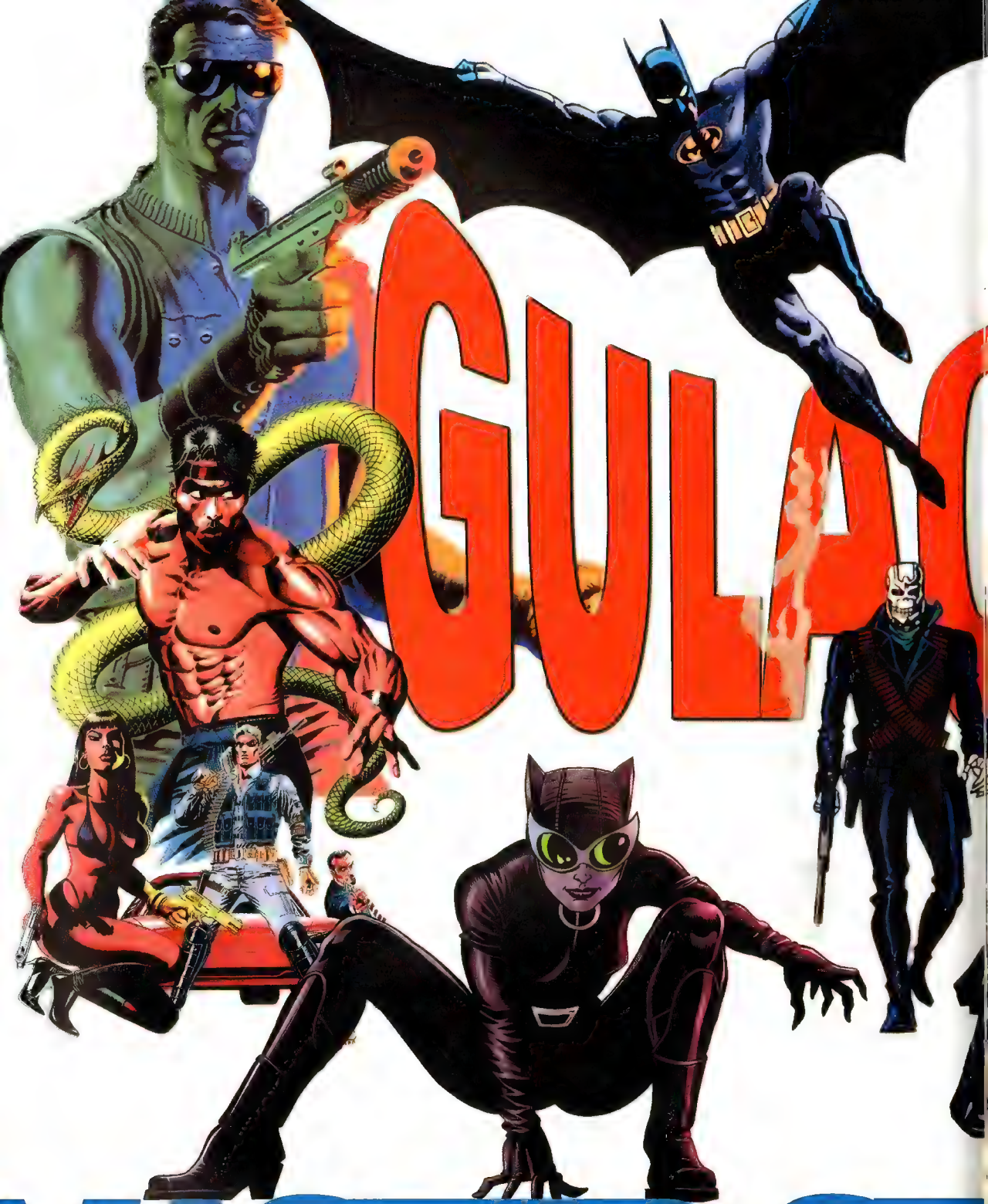
Still, the rewards far outweigh any negatives associated with his position. Some of those recent highlights for Spurlock and company include, "The *Hal Foster: Prince of Illustrators* book winning an IPPY Award [a prestigious honor granted by the Independent Publishers Book Awards committee]; knowing how much John Buscema—and every other artist—enjoyed the book [of his sketches] we produced; our three Eisner Award nominations; introducing Barron Storey to the comics market; my many years of work with Jim Steranko and Carmine Infantino; leading a Wally Wood revival; benefit projects including the Wally Wood Scholarship Fund and the Steranko: Spirit of America Fund." And there's much more that he's proud of, he demurs, other achievements too numerous to mention.

J. David Spurlock and Neal Adams at Midtown Comics in Manhattan for their recent signing of Adams' *Monsters* book.

As for the company's plans for the immediate future, Spurlock states that 2004 will see the release of a number of high profile projects bearing the Vanguard imprint. These include an eagerly awaited *EDGE* 10th Anniversary collection containing work by the likes of Dave McKean, Barron Storey, Bill Sienkiewicz, Jim Steranko, David Mack, and best-selling authors Neil Gaiman and Paul Theroux. That book will be followed by art prints showcasing work by legendary artists Carmine Infantino, Wally Wood and Jim Steranko. Still later this year Vanguard will release several more volumes in its critically acclaimed and award winning line of art books, including *RGK: The Art of Roy G. Krenkel*, *J. Allen St. John: Grand Master of Fantasy Art*, and *Thrilling Comic-Book Cover Art of Alex Schomburg*, as well as new editions of *The Wizard King Trilogy* of graphic novels by Wally Wood.

If that schedule is any indication, it appears certain that both Vanguard Productions and J. David Spurlock have only begun to fulfill their promise to spotlight the work, lives and careers of deserving artists from years past. And that's something that fans of those great comic artists can truly be grateful for...and excited about.

For more information on Vanguard Productions, their forthcoming books and their backlist, which includes a series of sketchbooks featuring the work of Al Williamson, Neal Adams, Wally Wood, Jeffrey Jones and John Romita, as well as career retrospectives and autobiographies of Carmine Infantino, Nick Cardy, Curt Swan, Joe Simon and Jim Steranko, there's no better place on the Internet to visit than http://www.creativemix.com/vanguard/.


GULA
MASTER ST

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE INTERVIEW:

PAUL GULACY

by Michael Kronenberg

Long before there was the Internet giving us lightning fast information on upcoming comics and their creators. Before there was a plethora of comic shops loaded with new comics, back issues and publications discussing and advertising everything involving comics. We relied on either our own judgement when picking up a new comic title or if we were lucky enough, the word of mouth from a fellow comic book reader. This was the case for me in 1976, when an acquaintance recommended I pick up a unique Marvel title. The artist was rendering the likeness of actor Marlon Brando in the storyline. As a huge Brando and movie fan, he thought I might enjoy it. The comic was Master of Kung Fu *#40 and the artist—Paul Gulacy. After purchasing and reading the issue, I was hooked. I found all the back issues Paul had done on* Master of Kung Fu *and followed the title until he departed with issue #50. From that point on, I snatched up anything done by Paul Gulacy.*

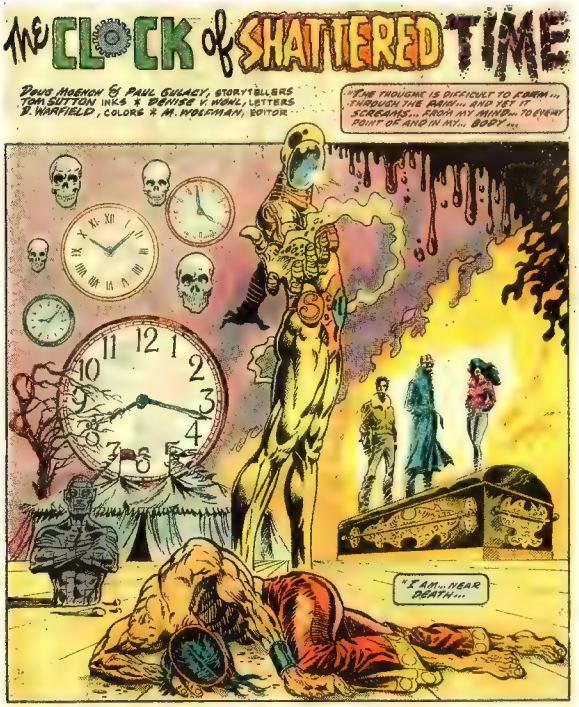
During his four years illustrating Master of Kung Fu *Paul joined the ranks of other comic book artists of the 1970s, Bernie Wrightson, Barry Smith, Michael Kaluta, Walt Simonson and Jim Starlin, as a talent who lifted comics creativity and expanded the boundaries of the medium.*

After leaving Master of Kung Fu *and Marvel, Paul took up residence in New York City to work as a book cover illustrator. After continual frustration while working with stifling art directors and publishers, Paul returned to comics. He worked with maverick writer Don McGregor to produce the seminal graphic novel* Sabre.

Paul then went on to a successful stint at Warren Publications producing beautifully rendered black and white thrillers for Eerie *magazine. He returned to mainstream comics in 1984 to team with his* Master of Kung Fu *partner Doug Moench for the well received Marvel mini-series* Six From Sirius. *Paul has been busy for the past twenty years, working for every major publisher and on numerous independent projects. His* Batman: Legends of the Dark *Knight story arc, "Prey" is considered by many to be the best that title has ever produced. For Dark Horse Comics, he has worked on such high-profile projects as* James Bond: Serpent's Tooth, Star Wars: Crimson Empire, Terminator: Secondary Objectives, Thing From Another World: Eternal Vows, *and* Batman vs. Predator II.

He has continued to experiment with the medium, working on unique and risky projects such as Acclaim Comics' The Grackle *and the story "Playing Dead" for DC's excellent, but short-lived horror anthology* Flinch. *In the last two years Paul has increased his output, first with the sardonic and action-packed, creator owned mini-series* SCI-Spy *(DC/Vertigo). He then briefly returned to Marvel for the long-awaited return of Shang-Chi in the* Master of Kung Fu *mini-series. Paul turned his attention to the Warren Ellis penned* Reload *for*

ORYTELLER

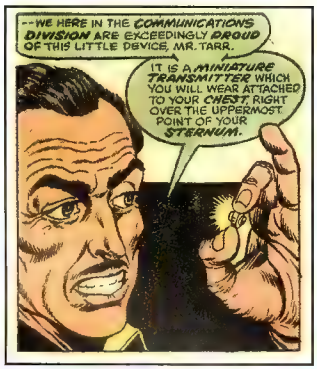

the CLOCK of SHATTERED TIME
DOUG MOENCH & PAUL GULACY, STORYTELLERS
TOM SUTTON INKS & DENISE V. WOHL, LETTERS
P. MAYFIELD, COLORS & M. HOLTZMAN, EDITOR
"THE THOUGHT IS DIFFICULT TO FORM... THROUGH THE PAIN... AND YET IT SCREAMS!... FROM MY MIND... TO EVERY POINT OF ME IN MY... BODY..."
"I AM... NEAR DEATH..."

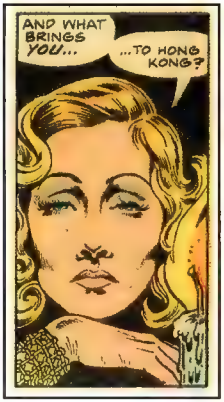
The splash page for *Master of Kung Fu* #42 (Jul 1976) shows the influence 1930s surrealism art had on Paul's work.

Wildstorm Comics, Currently, Paul has returned to a regular monthly title for the first time in 27 years. With Catwoman, *he has teamed with outstanding comic book scribe Ed Brubaker to bring life to Selina Kyle and her quest to clean up the East End of Gotham City. Catwoman combats the likes of gangsters, the Penguin, and the revived and deadly Philo Zeiss.*

More than any comic book artist before him, Paul Gulacy has brought the art of cinema to the comic book medium. Each panel resembles a frozen frame of celluloid. And similar to great movie directors such as Alfred Hitchcock, Terence Young, and Stanley Kubrick, Paul knows how to tell and pace a story, whether lightning fast through one of his noted fight sequences or building slowly towards an unexpected shock. Paul's detailed and intricate style has an atmosphere of uneasiness with a chilling undercurrent, very similar to the great surrealist painters of the 1930's, Salvador Dali, M.C. Escher, and Rene Magritte.

*Three years ago I contacted Paul and we became fast friends. I can not only attest to his immense talent, but also that he's one of the most sincere and giving persons I know. In 2005 Vanguard Productions (*Hal Foster: Prince of Illustrators, The Amazing World Of


--WE HERE IN THE COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION ARE EXCEEDINGLY PROUD OF THIS LITTLE DEVICE, MR. TARR.
IT IS A MINIATURE TRANSMITTER WHICH YOU WILL WEAR ATTACHED TO YOUR CHEST, RIGHT OVER THE UPPERMOST POINT OF YOUR STERNUM.



ABOVE and RIGHT: Paul modeled several of his supporting characters after movie stars,David Niven and Marlene Deitrich.

***Master of Kung Fu* #40 (May 1976), our first introduction to Larner, the character Paul modeled after Marlon Brando. Notice how Gulacy builds tension, slowing down the action by using the dripping faucet and adding multiple panels, giving the viewer the sense of motion as the bottle rolls across the floor. Not unlike Bernie Krigtein's technique in the EC story "Master Race."**

"THE DROPS FALL HEAVILY..."
"...AS HE DRIVE TO YET ANOTHER DARLING..."
ANOTHER DOOR...
"IT BEGINS TO RAIN, AS MAYFAIR MELTS INTO A MORE SQUALID REGION OF LONDON..."
THAT'S ENOUGH, LARNER
"THAT DOOR IS ALSO UNLOCKED..."
"...AND BEYOND IT..."
"THE SQUALOR IS FULFILLED..."
"...IN DESPAIR."
WELL, MR. HIGH-AND-MIGHTY BLACK JACK TARR... HOW DOES SMITH'S SEAT SMELL THESE DAYS?
YEAH? WELL, WHY DON'T YOU JUST SAVE THE SMELL OF THAT SEAT FOR YOURSELF, TARR!
SMITH DIDN'T WANT ME A YEAR AGO-- EXCEPT FOR A GOOD SWIFT BOOT IN THE PANTS OUT HIS BACK DOOR. AND I DON'T WANT HIM NOW--THE GUTTERS AROUND HERE ARE FILLED WITH URCHINS, YOU KNOW. IF I EVER FEEL THE URGE FOR A GOOD SWIFT BOOT.
BESIDES, I'M A TRAITOR-- IN CASE YOU'VE FORGOTTEN. AND DO YOU KNOW WHY--? BECAUSE THAT LITTLE WITCH LEIKO LET MY JENNIE DIE...
YOU REMEMBER HOW THEY TEAMED UP ON THAT MISSION TO BELGRADE--HOW JENNIE TRUSTED LEIKO, WITH EVERY OUNCE OF HER INNOCENT GUTS--HOW THE RUSSIANS BLEW THE WHISTLE ON THEIR OPERATION...
AND WHAT BRINGS A GENTLEMAN LIKE YOU SLUMMING AROUND HERE?
SMITH WANTS YOU BACK, LARNER-- FOR A JOB.
...AND HOW LEIKO CAME BACK ALONE, SAFE AND SOUND-- WITHOUT SO MUCH AS THE PIECES OF JENNIE'S BODY--?
15

Carmine Infantino, Steranko: Arte Noir*) will be publishing* Spies, Vixens, and Masters of Kung Fu: The Art of Paul Gulacy (see ad on pg. 67)*, which I will be compiling, editing and designing. I spoke with Paul as he was finishing* Catwoman *#30. On page 66 check out the Gulacy art index, courtesy of Dave Lemieux.*

CBM: Before Alex Ross or Bryan Hitch ever picked up a pencil, you were modeling your characters after film actors and actresses. In *Master of Kung Fu* you used Marlon Brando, Sean Connery, Marlene Deitrich, David Niven and of course Bruce Lee. Currently in Catwoman you've cast Robert Mitchum as Slam Bradley. What inspired you to use this unique characterization technique?

Gulacy: Well, for one thing it's been a long time since I've done that and when DC sent me copies of *Catwoman*, the Slam Bradley character immediately made me think of

RIGHT: Paul's brilliant painting for the cover of *Eclipse Magazine* depicting Max Allan Collins' character Ms. Tree. He captures all the mood and classic lyricism of the pulp artists, such as De Soto, Saunders and Rozen. Paul's comments on the painting were: "That was my super's .45 I held in my own gloved hand back in Jersey. I wanted to challenge myself to see if I could do a still life. On the phone is an actual number of a buddy of mine that I worked with in advertising back in New York. It was a total practical joke--he got pissed when he got bombarded with phone calls. It worked. BELOW: Presented here for the first time in full color (it was first printed in black and white in *Comic Book Artist* #7) is Paul's epic-like commission painting detailing his and Doug Moench's classic run on *Master of Kung Fu*.

COURTESY OF ALBERT MOY

COURTESY OF VANGUARD PRODUCTIONS

ABOVE: Cover art for *Epic Illustrated* #3 (Fall 1980, Marvel). BELOW: Cover art for the *Tenth Anniversary Edition of Sabre* (1988 Eclipse).

COURTESY OF VANGUARD PRODUCTIONS

Mitchum. He had that really strong presence and a face that was quite unique. Their noses looked similar. By the way, I don't recommend others to do this. I don't think any of us really enjoy bringing back people that passed away in any kind of digitally enhanced approach or whatever. There is something bizarre about it. In a case like comics I do believe it can be done and you can get away with it for some reason. Maybe in a respectful way that is paying homage, cartoons make it easier. Warner Brother cartoons did it constantly.

CBM: When you left Marvel in 1977, was it your intention to leave comics for good?

Gulacy: Yes, I had my fun. It was a kick so to speak

working for Marvel, but my deep down intentions were to move on to some other field. In my case, back then, it was cover jacket illustration. That was my next challenge at twenty-seven, to become a painter.

CBM: How was your experience working over at Warren Publications? I heard that Jim Warren could be difficult.

Gulacy: They were perfect at that time because I had just left Marvel and moved to New York. Now, with them I had the best of both worlds, I could paint covers and do interiors as well. It was a good stepping stone. I worked with Bill Dubay on *The Rook*. I still have a twenty-page Rook story floating around out there that was never published. Also, my editor was Louise Simonson and she was a pure delight. A couple of my personal favorite comic stories done were done with Don McGregor and Doug Moench for Warren.

I met Jim Warren once. He was a nice guy. He was supposed to have a real Sopwith Camel as a lawn ornament at his house. All in all, it was a nice experience. Great one-of-a-kind magazine that you'll never see the likes of again, with some of the best artists in the world working on it. All hail *Creepy* and *Eerie*. We'll never forget ya.

CBM: *Sabre* was one of the first graphic novels. It's a beautiful piece. Your art and storytelling are reminiscent of a Sergio Leone Spaghetti Western. How was it working on an independent project without the watchful or interfering eye of a big publisher?

Gulacy: The whole thing was crazy. Two friends of Don McGregor's named Jan and Dean from Staten Island were financing the thing. Jan was the musician brother and Dean was the wannabe comic book publisher brother. Not only that, their father was a musician who wrote and performed the classic oldie tune *Hot Buttered*

SLOW FADE
COME OUT OF THE SUN-LIGHT--
--RISE FROM THE BURNING DAWN--
--STRIDE INTO THE WATCHING NOON--
--HIDE IN THE MID NIGHT SHADOWS.
OF AN ENDANGERED SPECIES

Opening splash page to McGregor and Gulacy's *Sabre*. Paul illustrates the story like an epic spaghetti western. If Sergio Leone had directed the movie, this is what it would look like.

Popcorn. I worked on *Sabre* right after I left Marvel. I was incognito trying to lay low while I was putting a portfolio together and working simultaneously on *Sabre*. There was a concern if these guys could pay, but they came through every time. The fun part was doing this totally independent from any of the big guys. McGregor was the one with the huge agenda. He had a controversial reputation for never following the status quo. This guy was always fighting the powers that be. With *Sabre* he could tell everybody to take a hike and produce a pet project without any editorial shackles. The icing on the cake was the fact that it became a hit. Dean went on to become the publisher of Eclipse Comics and Jan became a very successful music producer. All's well that ends well in the case of the Mullaney brothers.

THE SAUCERS -- TWELVE MEN -- ALL ON HIS OWN.
I OVERHEARD IT ON THE RADIO.
YEAH? WELL, JUST LET HIM TRY TO GET THROUGH HERE.
INDIGO'S MEN, ALL RIGHT -- AND HIS BASE MAY BE INSIDE THOSE RUINS... INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN...
JACKPOT... BUT HOW TO COLLECT?

LEFT: James Bond infiltrates Indigo's hideout from *James Bond: Serpent's Tooth* #2 (1993 Dark Horse Comics). Another superbly rendered image showing Paul's movie and surrealist influences. LOWER LEFT: Gulacy captures the spirit of Bond in comics like no one else before him. The influence of Bond illustrators Robert McGinnis and Frank McCarthy are evident in Paul's painting for the cover of *James Bond: Serpent's Tooth #1*. ABOVE: Bond in a usual spot, time ticking away and death staring him right in the face, from *James Bond: Serpent's Tooth* #3 (1993 Dark Horse Comics).

CBM: What was the industry like for you in the late seventies? Many of the name artists, like you, abandoned DC and Marvel to seek independent projects.

Gulacy: Well, because it could be done. Now, you have Eclipse. You have *Heavy Metal* and you even have Marvel now with their independent magazine called *Epic*. The industry was changing. They were waking up to the fact that the creators who create stories and characters deserve to have publishing rights to their own properties and the fans supported that.

CBM: *James Bond: Serpent's Tooth* (1993) mini-series was great, and the only time I believe comics have ever captured the spirit of the James Bond experience. You received some very positive feedback from the Ian Fleming estate. Were they difficult to work with on the project?

Gulacy: No, they were a breeze. I wasn't about to mess around with this character. It's Bond. Not Nick Fury, Flint, *The Man From Uncle* or whoever. 007, baby. I worked closely with Doug on the storyline, which I usually did through the years and made sure it caught that flavor. It's my favorite book. Personally, I'm not sure I would do it again. I think we said what we had to say with *Serpent's Tooth* and Bond.

CBM: *SCI Spy* (2001) was created with your longtime partner Doug Moench. How did this creator owned project come about?

Gulacy: That was back when Axel Alonzo was editing Vertigo books. I had done a few stories from scripts lying around but one day I hit him with a character I created; he read the outline and loved it. Along the way he left DC for Marvel as you know and Will Dennis took the editor seat.

I was banging my head for quite a while for a creator-owned concept and then one day a white flash hit me in the middle of my forehead literally. We all know who the greatest secret agent on earth is, right? Okay, how about if we take a guy and make him the greatest

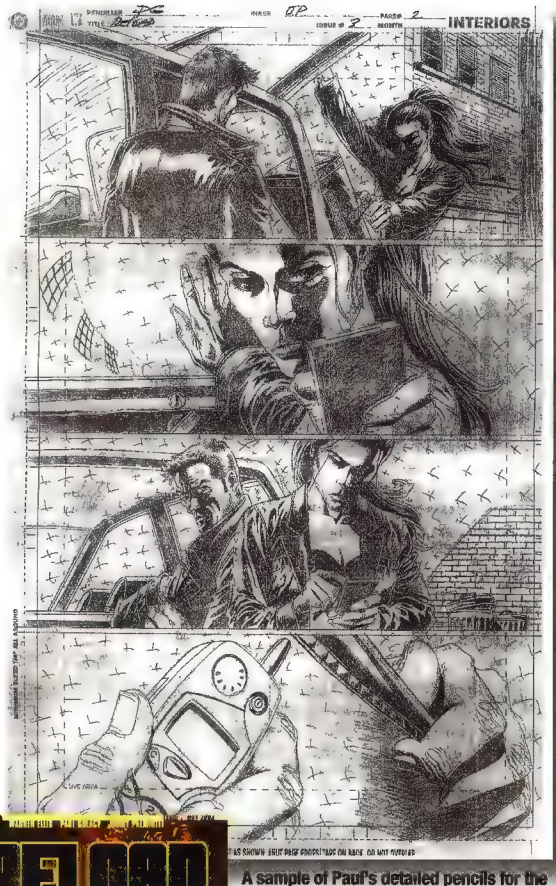
secret agent in the galaxy? Not quite James Bond meets *Star Wars,* but close to it with the sci-fi slant. At first I wanted to get a writer with an offbeat sense of humor who was capable of making it a spoof and a parody but not going as far, let's say as *Austin Powers*. Somewhere around how the Flint character was handled back in the '60s.

In the meantime, Doug flew in from the East Coast to attend a con in Seattle with me and I ended up spilling the beans to him about *SCI Spy*. I explained the look, the feel, the X's and O's of the storyline and he said he'd write it under the condition that I cut him in for 50%. I went along with it considering he had better Hollywood connections than I did.

LOWER LEFT: The cover to *S.C.I. Spy* #6 (Sep 2000, Vertigo/DC) an homage to Frank McCarthy's illustration for (TOP) *You Only Live Twice* (1967 United Artisis). BELOW: The origin of Sebastian Starchild, the hero of *S.C.I. Spy*. The character and storyline was originally conceived by Paul in a creative burst he described as "...one day a white flash hit me in the middle of my forehead literally."

CBM: Is it true that you and Doug are trying to option *SCI Spy* for a movie?

Gulacy: As we speak, twenty-two presentation



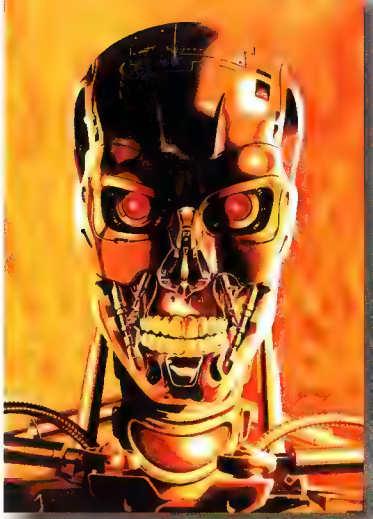
A sample of Paul's detailed pencils for the Warren Ellis penned mini-series *Reload* (2003 Wildstorm Productions). LEFT: Cover for *Reload* #1 (pencils and inks: Paul Gulacy).

packages have gone out to actors, directors, producers and studios. A few have turned it down including James Cameron's Lightstorm outfit. But he actually read the 6 comics. He apparently had his own sci-fi thing in the works, a 3-D movie. Our fingers are crossed. I don't want to jinx it by saying too much. Doug and I are both aware of how fickle Hollywood can be. I give the whole thing up to God.

CBM: How did you like working with Warren Ellis on the mini-series *Reload* (2002)?

Gulacy: My pal Jimmy Palmiotti set that up after we wrapped up *Master of Kung Fu* at Marvel. It was a good offbeat drama; I liked the female assassin and the supporting characters around her in the story.

Warren is a good solid writer. It was a pleasure to work with him. He's like this idea machine that cranks out one cool thing after another. I'm glad I got the chance to team up with him.



COURTESY OF VANGUARD PRODUCTIONS

Paul's cover painting for *Terminator: Secondary Objectives* trade paperback (Dark Horse Comics, March 1992). Unfortunately, the final printed piece's color did not match his painting.

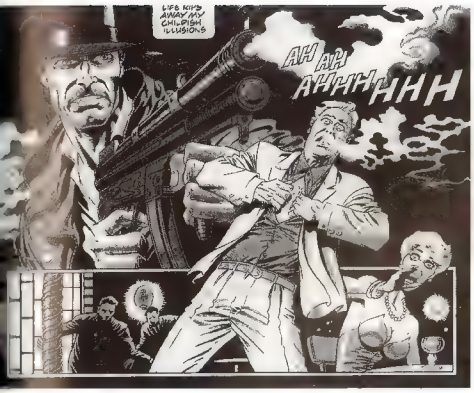
CBM: Of the half a dozen Batman series you've done, which would be your favorite and most satisfying?

Gulacy: Probably *Terror*, but if I were to do it again, I would tone down the ultra erotic Catwoman.

CBM: Two of your most underrated projects were the mini-series *The Grackle* (Acclaim Comics, 1997) and the story "Playing Dead" (*Flinch* #4, 1999). Both were beautifully rendered in black and white with grays achieved on Craftint board. How did you like working on these offbeat stories and will we see more of this in the future?

COURTESY OF VANGUARD PRODUCTIONS

The evocative cover painting for the graphic novel *Agent 13: Acolytes of Darkness* (TSR, 1990).



LEFT and BELOW: Paul and writer Mike Baron teamed up for the hard-boiled mini-series *The Grackle: Doublecross* (Acclaim Comics, 1997). The story is a modern day film noir. Paul drew the entire story in black and white using Craftint board to achieve grays. Paul's mastery of the difficult Craftint medium is reminiscent of EC greats Wally Wood and Al Williamson.

Gulacy: Every other time I talk to Steranko, before he hangs up he'll ask me when I'm going to do another *Grackle* and then follow it with this huge guffaw. I don't know what he's trying to say to me. [Laughs] Maybe he thinks it sucks. I don't know. I liked that story. Baron was fun to work with. He's another guy with a ton of ideas floating around in his dome. It was so nuts—a drug wreaking havoc in New York that when consumed it could trigger off spontaneous combustion. [Laughs]. "We'll put the Grackle on that case."

A panel from Bruce Jones' and Paul's unusual horror/western story "Playing Dead" from *Flinch* #4 (DC/Vertigo, Aug 1999). Again, Paul utilizes Craftint to help convey the vast and cold atmosphere of the old west.

Oh yeah, the western, I love Bruce Jones' work. All that ill stuff he did with Corben. He's another one that can write his ass off. And he can draw like a mother too. Anyone who missed these stories should track them down.

CBM: After several false starts and close calls, you received the green light from Marvel for you and Doug Moench to revisit *Master of Kung Fu* (2002). Now that the project is done, what were your feelings about working with Marvel again, and did the project meet yours and Doug's expectations?

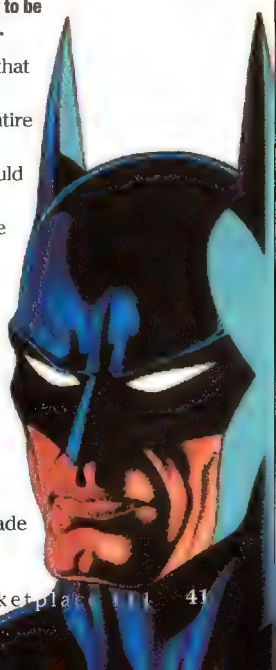
Gulacy: I don't think Axel Alonso (Marvel Max series editor) wants Doug or me to work there again. I guess you can say that we just didn't see eye-to-eye on many things and that sort of hindered the entire project from the first week we began.

You know, first of all this thing should have been done long ago. What Doug and I set out to do was introduce these characters and this series back to a new wave of readers and I think we accomplished that. I felt it was a decent job under the conditions. We all worked hard on it. If I was to personally sum it up—I'd call it a good grade-B action flick and I love those. [Laughs]

CBM: You are now the regular penciler on DC's *Catwoman*. What made

PREY: BOOK IV
THE NIGHTMARE
I've lived these deaths a thousand times, and the dream is always the same...
...a nightmare giving birth to the other dream, equally dark—the dream of the Cat.
M-MOM.
DAD
I'd still never look.
Presented by MOENCH-GULACY-AUSTIN with COSTANZA-OLIFF-DOBLEY-NELSON

The extraordinary splash page to the fourth chapter of "Prey" from *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight* #14 (Jan 1991, DC). Paul brilliantly draws upon his film influence to show Batman's origin played out as a movie poster. "Prey" is considered by many to be the best Batman storyline in his long history.



Paul and Doug Moench re-teamed for the long-awaited return of Shang-Chi. *Master of Kung Fu* #1 mini-series (Marvel, Sep 2002).

you come back to a regular monthly book after 27 years?

Gulacy: Because the industry has changed. Back in the old days for example, I could call up an editor and get booked up a year in advance. The opportunity isn't there anymore. So, you have to carefully plan out your days ahead like any business. This fell out of the sky and I jumped on it. Not only that, I happen to love the Catwoman character.

CBM: How do you like working with writer Ed Brubaker and how closely do you work with him?

Gulacy: Ed had a set criteria that we discussed from the start. He laid out a few things, I got the gist and we plowed forward from there. I received a pile of the stories from DC and that helped, considering I didn't follow the book.

CBM: *Catwoman* started as an "animated" style art book. How did you approach changing the book's style?

Gulacy: Dan Didio wanted a different look; he liked the look of *Reload* and asked Jimmy and I to come on board. That's how it came about in a nutshell.

Catwoman battles The Joker's rogue henchmen as she tries to save a kidnapped child in *Catwoman* #26 (DC, Dec 2003).

CBM: *Catwoman* seems to be benefiting greatly from your cinematic art style. Did you and Ed discuss this?

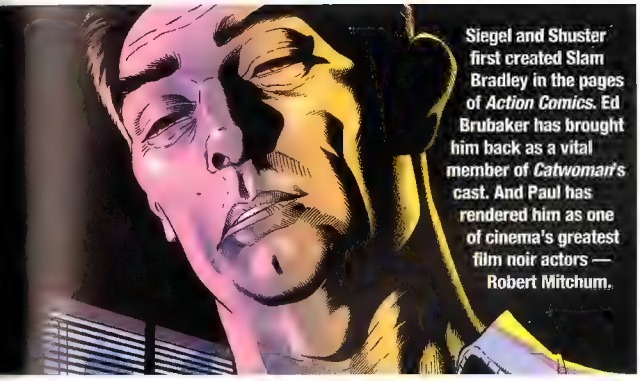
Gulacy: No. I didn't even know what style I was going to use. What you see is what I see when I read his script, plain and simple. No meetings, long discussions and all that, its "Here's the script in hand, you got a deadline, let's get rollin'."

Catwoman #25 (DC, Nov 2003) marks the return of Paul to monthly comics (pencils and finished art shown). He and author Ed Brubaker are forging a new chapter in Selina (Catwoman) Kyle's life as she protects the dangerous East End of Gotham City.

CBM: Similar to *Master of Kung Fu, Catwoman* has an extended number of supporting characters. How do you approach balancing these characterizations?

Gulacy: The balance is the so-called scene cut, not the amount of characters. It's been working really well so far. Ed's a master at it. True-to-life characterization, keeping the reader hooked, intrigued and anticipating the turn of the page. I've yet to have any dispute with Ed's way. It's rock solid.

CBM: The current *Catwoman* story arc has been building towards a showdown between



Siegel and Shuster first created Slam Bradley in the pages of *Action Comics*. Ed Brubaker has brought him back as a vital member of *Catwoman*'s cast. And Paul has rendered him as one of cinema's greatest film noir actors — Robert Mitchum.

Catwoman and the Batman villain Philo Zeiss. Zeiss wears goggles that allow him to slow down the movement he sees through them, allowing him to react much faster than his opponent. You've given Zeiss a total makeover; he's much more sinister and cold-blooded. What are your thoughts on this unusual villain?

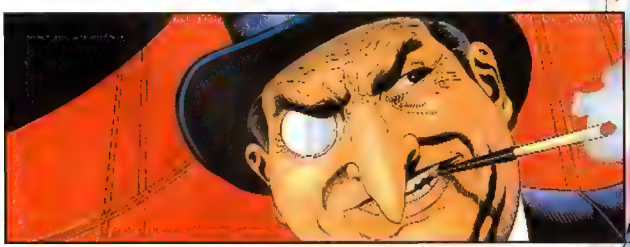
Gulacy: When I first saw him he had this 80's punk hair thing going on. I got rid of that to give him almost this Nazi look. Very disciplined and calculating, a real killer with no remorse. This is not some cardboard cut out guy that Selina can just toss aside. He almost beat Batman. I think Selina wished she never ran into this guy.

CBM: You've given Selina a real style and look, not only physically, but the way she dresses, how her apartment is furnished, and the way she carries herself. Can you elaborate on this?

Gulacy: According to Ed, she gave up her days as a cat burglar, but has a bundle put away and likes nice things that reflect her tastes, which extend to her attempts to clean up the East End. This is the reborn Selina. Giving back and that giving back might be her kicking your ass. She should actually run for mayor. Maybe we'll see that one day. [Laughs]

CBM: Your covers are some of the best in the business, comparable to movie one-sheets. Can you walk us step-by-step (thought process/decision-making) through one of your covers?

Gulacy: Pretty simple, again, no long discussions, meetings, etc. just Matt Idelson (*Catwoman* editor) calling, saying "They need a cover by this date, we'd like to see this as an idea." I send them a rough; they okay it, bing, bang, boom, done. On occasion, I'll use a model.



Be sure to check out the Gulacy checklist on page 66.

CBM: Vanguard Productions will be releasing a book on your career titled *Spies, Vixens & Masters of Kung Fu: The Art of Paul Gulacy*. What are some of the things we can look forward to in it?

Gulacy: I'm really glad somebody is doing this before I'm collecting Social Security for God's sake. I'm really excited about this. We'll be including a lot of never before published paintings, my pencil pages, roughs, how I utilize models, posters, covers, unpublished work, rejected pieces, the works. Stay tuned for Vanguard Production's updates.

In the pages of *Catwoman*, Ed and Paul have revived Philo Zeiss and turned him into one of DC's deadliest villains. Paul has changed his look making him "...very disciplined and calculating, a real killer with no remorse. This is not some cardboard cut out guy that Selina can just toss aside." The Penguin (below) hires Zeiss to exterminate Catwoman, but not even he can control this wild cat.

PULP ROOTS

For a long time, I've had my suspicions about the X-Men villain called the Vanisher. You remember him. He debuted in *X-Men* #2 way back in 1963, in a stirring story called "No One Can Stop the Vanisher!"

Despite his cool wild talent—the mutant ability to teleport from one place to another by the power of pure thought—there was just something not quite right about him.

As an evil mutant, he wasn't much to look at—scrawny, bald as an egg and bespectacled. He even looked vaguely elderly. Not the most fearsome foe you could imagine. His costume was outlandish, to say the least. It almost defies description, other than to say it was scarlet and scaly on the cover, topped by a bulbous helmet that framed his bald head like a bloated flower.

And there was this long black squiggle running down his chest that always puzzled me. It seemed to suggest...something. But what?

When I got older, I thought I figured out the origin of the character. Doc Savage had battled a criminal teleporter also called the Vanisher in the November 1936 issue of his original pulp magazine series. That Vanisher was also an older-looking character. In this case, he dressed like Igor the hunchback out of a 1930s *Frankenstein* movie, which made him look very creepy indeed.

Here's how he was first described in Lester Dent's novel, *The Vanisher*:

"If it was a man—and there could be no certainty on this point—it was not a large man. The contrary, rather. In stature, the individual would hardly have topped a youth in his early teens. The Senegambian marauder did not have the slimness of youth, however; although the legs were spindling, the torso was burly and misshapen. Just what gave the prowler the queer look became evident when a faint gleam of light chanced to be encountered. The creature was a pronounced humpback!"

Later in the book, Dent offers more detail:

"The face was particularly striking. It was a wad of wrinkles, much too red and healthy-looking, and white hair hung down from the forehead and hid the ears, if any."

From the way he mysteriously evaporates and reappears to the spine-tingling tinkling of a music box, the Vanisher is thought to be a witch. But things are not always what they seem, as the climax reveals.

"The humpback looked up. At this close range, they could tell that

OF THE X-MEN

the hideous visage was a mask, the eye holes were distinct, and one of the adhesive lips had come loose from the lip of the wearer."

This Vanisher was revealed as an ordinary man. His powers of teleportation were not natural, but supplied by a compact electronic device hidden in the artificial hump on his back. He didn't really call himself the Vanisher, I should mention. He signed his threat letters, "The One With the Camel Back."

I strongly suspect Stan Lee of having based the X-Men's version on this then-thirty-year-old concept. Lee once told me he was a real Doc Savage fan when he was younger, and read the pulp magazine intensively around 1935-36.

Of course, for all I know, Jack Kirby was also into Doc in that time frame. So I suppose I shouldn't be too confident as to where I place the blame.

But my money's on Stan. And I'll tell you why. As I said, I've long had my suspicions about this character. It comes down to his weird costume. It reminds me in a funny way of another Stan Lee villain, whom the Mighty Thor fought back in those days. I'm referring to the character first introduced in "Challenge of the Human Cobra" another creation of 1963. The Human Cobra wore green, where the Vanisher preferred a pinkish-red, but they could almost have been reptilian cousins.

I'm thinking especially of their exotic headgear. Earlier I described the Vanisher's helmet as looking like some kind of exotic flower. But it's not quite that. It really more closely resembles the inflated hood of a cobra.

In fact, it looks more cobra-like then the Human Cobra's similar rig! Both bad guys wore scaly outfits with black serpent designs on their chests, and huge cobra-like headgear. Could

By Will Murray

DOC SAVAGE
MAGAZINE
"THE VANISHER"
THE STRANGEST SUPER-HEROES OF ALL!
the X-MEN
2 NOV
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
12¢
IN THE SENSATIONAL FANTASTIC FOUR STYLE!
I'VE BEATEN THE X-MEN BEFORE AND I SHALL DO IT AGAIN! BUT THIS TIME IT WILL BE... FOREVER!!
STAY BACK, ALL OF YOU! THOSE ARE THE ORDERS OF PROFESSOR X!!
THE X-MEN MUST FIND OUT... HOW DO YOU BEAT A MUTANT WHO IS...UNBEATABLE?!!
A BOOK-LENGTH MARVEL CLASSIC:
"NOTHING CAN STOP THE VANISHER!"...

The Vanisher spans the decades: *Doc Savage Magazine* (Dec 1936, Street & Smith) and *X-Men* #2 (Nov 1963, Marvel Comics).

this be a coincidence?

Not if you look at the cover dates. *X-Men* #2 was dated November 1963. So is *Journey into Mystery* #98, where the Human Cobra first appeared. Both went on sale the very same day, September 3rd.

It's important to note that the X-Men story was the work of Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, while the Thor story came from a collaboration between Lee and Don Heck.

Let me float a theory. Those were busy days at Marvel Comics. *The Avengers* and *The X-Men* and had just been launched. *Daredevil* would be next. Suppose Stan Lee inadvertently gave both Don Heck and Jack Kirby the same basic idea for a villain. A character called the Cobra. I can see Lee saying to both artists, "You work out plot and costume details. Come up with something really unique in terms of powers. I'll fill in the rest."

So Don and Jack blithely went off to do their jobs. And to Stan Lee's consternation, both men came back with villains who might have been second cousins. Obviously, you couldn't have Marvel Comics simultaneously unleashing *two* villains called the Cobra. Especially coming out the same week. One of them would have to be modified.

Ultimately, there could have only been one good solution. Thor's Human Cobra possessed reptilian powers that were specific to his namesake. On the other hand, with his teleporting skills, the X-Men's evil mutant counterpart could be called anything.

Thus was born the Vanisher.

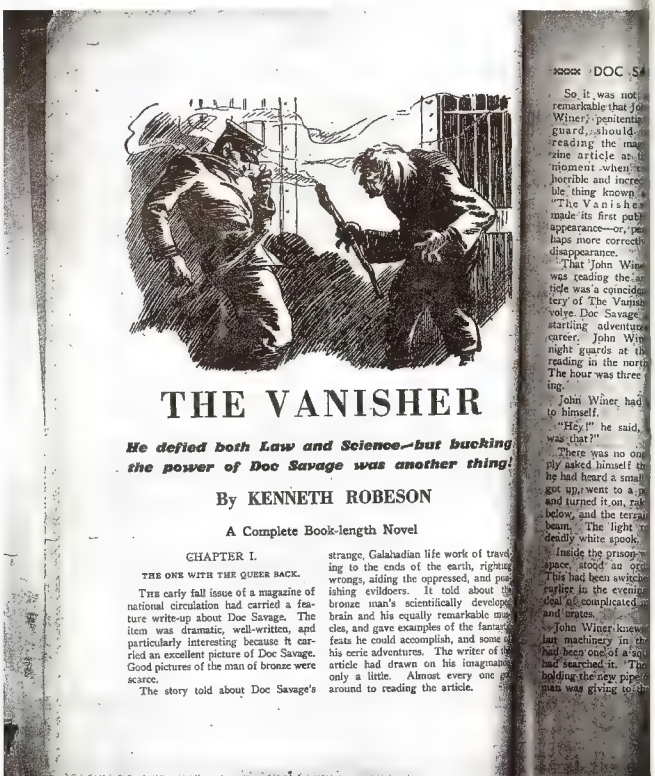
Possibly an old memory of a Doc Savage novel called *The Vanisher* helped Stan out of the jam. Like the X-Men story, *The Vanisher* was set in Washington DC. Quite a coincidence.

If my theory is correct, this would explain the mutant Vanisher's peculiar scales, and inflated cobraesque hood. Not to mention the snakelike silhouette on his chest. It was probably turned into a spooky but nondescript squiggle in the ink stage as a compromise. His cryptic costume, no doubt a snaky emerald in the conceptual stage, was colored an unreptilian rose-pink to throw off readers. His gloves, boots and cape were an odd purplish-red.

Like many theories, mine lacks hard evidence. Or does it? If you look closely at the back of the Vanisher's headgear you will notice a telltale design. It's a black-and-white diamond shape.

It's similar to a kind of design found in nature—on the back

Interior title page to Lester Dent's "The Vanisher" *Doc Savage Magazine* (Dec 1936, Street & Smith).



THE VANISHER

He defied both Law and Science—but bucking the power of Doc Savage was another thing!

By KENNETH ROBESON

A Complete Book-length Novel

CHAPTER I.

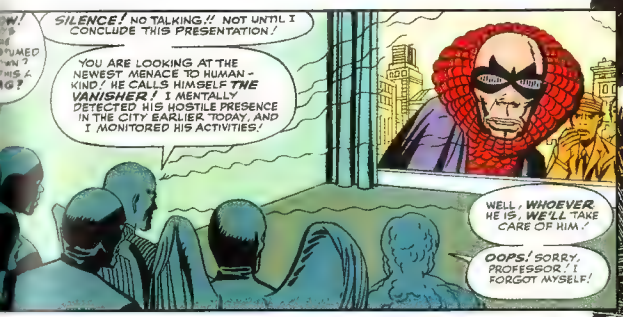
THE ONE WITH THE QUEER BACK.

THE early fall issue of a magazine of national circulation had carried a feature write-up about Doc Savage. The item was dramatic, well-written, and particularly interesting because it carried an excellent picture of Doc Savage. Good pictures of the man of bronze were scarce.

The story told about Doc Savage's strange, Galahadian life work of traveling to the ends of the earth, righting wrongs, aiding the oppressed, and punishing evildoers. It told about the bronze man's scientifically developed brain and his equally remarkable muscles, and gave examples of the fantastic feats he could accomplish, and some of his eerie adventures. The writer of the article had drawn on his imagination only a little. Almost every one got around to reading the article.

of the hood of a certain species of cobra. Many vipers, like the skull-marked Death's Head Cobra, bear telltale black-and-white markings on the backs of their heads. This, along with the serpentine chest squiggle, seems pretty conclusive to me.

In fact, one species of cobra sports a spectacle design—which is echoed in the Vanisher's eerie white-lensed goggles. The Spectacle Cobra's makings consist of a black double frame containing twin white

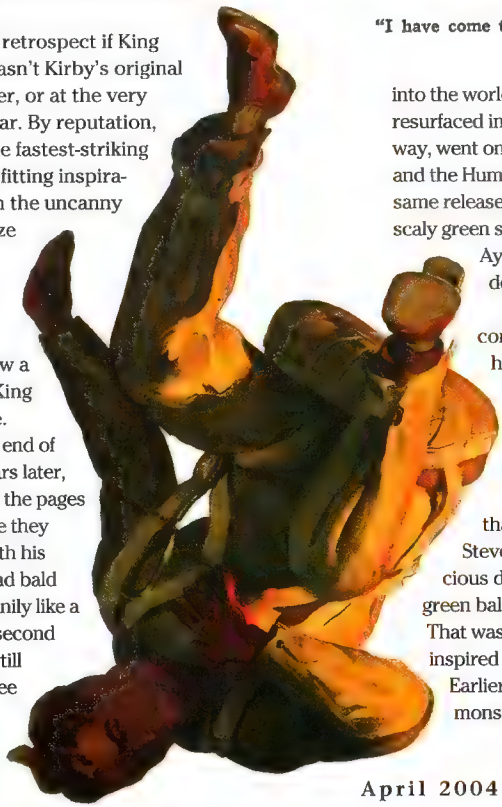

SILENCE! NO TALKING!! NOT UNTIL I CONCLUDE THIS PRESENTATION!
YOU ARE LOOKING AT THE NEWEST MENACE TO HUMAN-KIND! HE CALLS HIMSELF THE VANISHER! I MENTALLY DETECTED HIS HOSTILE PRESENCE IN THE CITY EARLIER TODAY, AND I MONITORED HIS ACTIVITIES!
WELL, WHOEVER HE IS, WE'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM!
OOPS! SORRY, PROFESSOR! I FORGOT MYSELF!

ABOVE: The first glimpse of Marvel's "The Vanisher" *X-Men* #2 (Nov 1963, Marvel Comics). RIGHT: Interior illustration of "The Vanisher" from *Doc Savage Magazine* (Dec 1936, Street & Smith).

eye spots. Place an example of that kind of marking against the Vanisher's face and you have a pretty fair match.

I would wonder in retrospect if King Cobra or the Viper wasn't Kirby's original name for the character, or at the very least something similar. By reputation, the cobra is one of the fastest-striking vipers of them all—a fitting inspiration for a mutant with the uncanny ability to dematerialize at will, and then rematerialize at another location. Come to think of it, didn't Kirby later draw a DC character called King Cobra? I rest my case.

But that wasn't the end of the Vanisher. Four years later, he popped up again in the pages of *X-Men* #38. This time they colored him green. With his green-on-green suit, and bald skull, he looked uncannily like a caped Vulture, or his second cousin. Maybe that's still another reason why Lee couldn't let him out



"I have come to tell the truth about the whole thing," the strange creature said.

into the world in serpentine green back in the day the Vulture resurfaced in *Amazing Spider-Man* #7 (Dec 1963). Which, by the way, went on sale September 10—a week after the Vanisher and the Human Cobra first surfaced. More amazingly it had the same release date as *Rawhide Kid* #37, featuring still another scaly green super-villain, the Rattler, by Stan Lee and Dick Ayers. (Jack Kirby drew the cover, and for all I know designed his costume.)

Maybe Stan gave the same snaky super-villain concept to three different artists! Whatever really happened, September 1963 has to go down in Marvel history as the Month of the Snake. The Vanisher, the Human Cobra, the Rattler and the Vulture's return all hit the racks within spitting distance of each other.

Add to that reptilian roster the intriguing fact that a month earlier, in *Amazing Spider-Man* #6, Steve Ditko's green-skinned Lizard made his auspicious debut. Do you suppose he was the one who got the green ball rolling in the first place?

That was not the first time a Doc Savage novel apparently inspired a Silver Age Marvel super-villain, I might add. Earlier in 1963, *Incredible Hulk* #6 pitted the green man-monster against the Metal Master, an orange alien from

another world with the mental ability to shape and reshape and otherwise manipulate earthly metal by mind power alone. He bears more than a passing resemblance to another 1936 Doc Savage super-criminal who devised a device that caused metal to lose its molecular cohesion and melt without heat. His name? The Metal Master. And he appeared in the Doc Savage novel of the same title. Coincidence? I doubt it.

You see, one of the original X-Men was ripped from whole cloth out of the pages of *Doc Savage Magazine*. I refer to Henry P. "Hank" McCoy, better known as the Beast. As the Beast, Hank was a throwback of some kind to prehistoric ape man. He possessed the general physique of a highland gorilla, along with simian strength and monkeylike agility. As a counterpoint to his primitive body, Lee and Kirby gave him the brain of a research scientist.

12¢
THE INCREDIBLE
HULK
6
MAR
EVEN YOUR LIMITLESS STRENGTH CANNOT SAVE YOU FROM ME, HULK! ALL THE METAL ON EARTH IS MINE TO COMMAND, FOR I AM--
"THE METAL MASTER!"
IF THE HULK CAN'T HANDLE THE METAL MASTER, IT COULD MEAN THE END OF THE HUMAN RACE!

Doc Savage fans know where I'm going with this. Doc's had five assistants, one of whom had been christened Andrew Blodgett Mayfair. But he preferred his nickname, "Monk."

Again, I quote from Lester Dent:

"One of the Yanks looked as if an immediate ancestor had been a three-hundred-pound gorilla. His great, corded, red-bristled arms were nearly long enough to permit him to walk on all fours without stooping.

"He had an enormous mouth, a tuft of a nose, which apparently had been pounded by many fists, and little eyes almost lost in pits of gristle. His ears were shapeless, and one was perforated with a hole the size of a lead pencil—an opening which could

LEFT: *The Incredible Hulk* #6 (Mar 1963) featuring The Metal Master. BELOW LEFT: Interior title page to Dent's "The Metal Master" *Doc Savage Magazine* (Mar 1936, Street & Smith). BELOW: Cover for *Doc Savage Magazine* (Mar 1936, Street & Smith).

THE METAL MASTER

had within his grasp a terrible power of evil! But he reckoned without the scientific genius of Doc Savage!

A Complete Book-length Novel

By KENNETH ROBESON

CHAPTER I.

THE SCARED OLD MAN.

Doc Savage's headquarters in New York City are on the eighty-sixth floor of a ponderous midtown skyscraper. The building is in a business section. Late at night, the region becomes comparatively deserted. There are many dark doorways in the neighborhood.

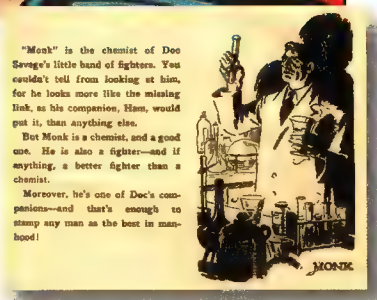
The scared old man lurked in one of these darkened doorways.

The old man had something on his mind, something that was worrying him. He crouched in the shadowy entry and devoted his time to peering about. He was evidently very frightened, too.

It was sleeting a little. Cold. A taxicab, when it swung to the curb near the old man's hiding place, skidded a bit.

A girl got out of the cab. She was tall, in a mannish cloth coat and a felt hat that was not far from being mascu-

UGHH! GOTTA STRAIGHTEN MYSELF OUT! TENSE MY MUSCLES! IT... IT'S AGONY! MY ARMS ARE KILLIN' ME!
BUT I'VE GOT TO STAY WITH IT! CAN'T FLUNK THIS TEST! CAN'T!


"Monk" is the chemist of Doc Savage's little band of fighters. You couldn't tell from looking at him, for he looks more like the missing link, as his companion, Ham, would put it, than anything else.
But Monk is a chemist, and a good one. He is also a fighter—and if anything, a better fighter than a chemist.
Moreover, he's one of Doc's companions—and that's enough to stamp any man as the best in manhood!
MONK

There are strong similarities between X-Men member The Beast and Doc Savage's agent Monk.

have been made by a bullet.

"The hair on his nubbin of a head, as coarse as rusty shingle nails, and of about the same hue, seemed an extension of a skull; with no room provided for brain."

Despite all appearances, Monk Mayfair was one of the greatest industrial chemists of his day.

Monk and Hank were both slangy speakers. After a few issues, to make the Beast even more distinctive, Lee had him talk like a polysyllabic college professor. My favorite Beast line was "Is it imperative that you resort to such drastic measures just to emphasize a point?"

As it happens, there was a Doc Savage aide who liked to exercise the English language unmercifully, too. William Harper Littlejohn was the geologist/archeologist of Doc's team, and a typical example of a Johnny Littlejohn one-liner went like this: "Disquisitional recapitulation of imperspicuous symptomatology tends to an unequivocal belief."

It seems that Stan Lee, looking to improve upon the Monk Mayfair-inspired Beast, added a pinch of Johnny Littlejohn.

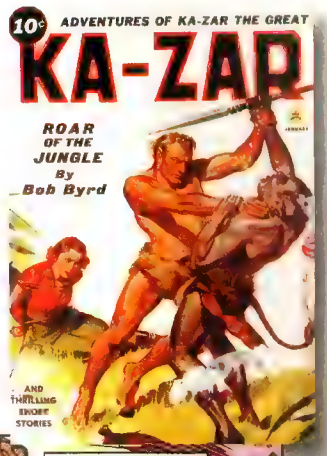
The pulp roots of the X-Men go pretty deep.

It's a stretch to say that X-Men's Angel was inspired by Marvel's Golden Age Angel, who was often cover-featured on early issues of *Marvel Mystery Comics*, but publisher Martin Goodman liked to keep names and characters alive from his early days, whether they deserved it or not.

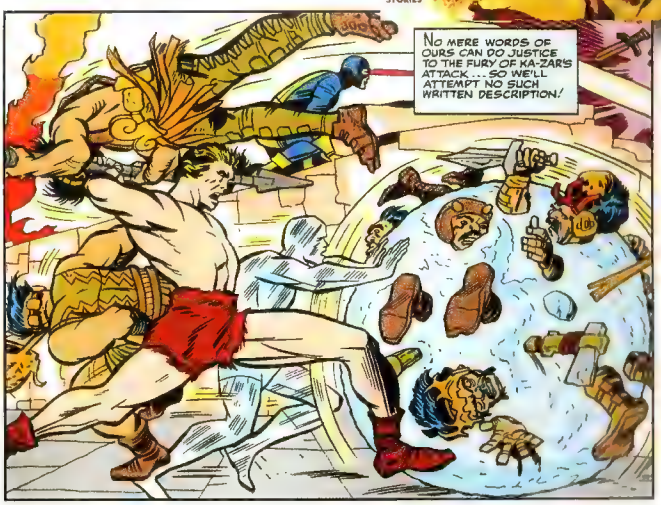
Before he got into comic books in 1939, Goodman was a pulp publisher. He rarely issued titles starring single characters, but one was *Ka-Zar*, a Tarzan imitation. Goodman must have had a soft spot in his heart for Ka-Zar because although the pulp lasted a paltry three issues, he revived him for *Marvel Comics* #1. The character never caught on, but Goodman, knowing that the original Tarzan had been a gold mine for creator Edgar Rice Burroughs, kept trying to bring him back. Which is why, even though he was definitely not a mutant and ordinarily would never be mistaken for one, Ka-Zar was reintroduced in *X-Men* #10. After that, he and his sabre-tooth tiger Zabu bounced around the Marvel Universe, never really finding a permanent place.

I suspect when Goodman and Lee were busy reviving the Human Torch and Sub-Mariner, both of whom were changed from their original comics incarnations, they finally got around to the Angel.

The differences between the Timely-era Angel and the mutant version are so great it's easier to talk about what they had in common. Both wore predominately blue costumes, and were called The Angel. The original was



Pulp and Marvel publisher Martin Goodman revived Tarzan imitation Ka-Zar in *X-Men* #10 (Mar 1965 Marvel Comics).



Both the Timely and Marvel Angels wore predominately blue costumes. The original was an enigmatic crime fighter whose real name was never given. He possessed no powers.

an enigmatic crime fighter whose real name (if he had one) was never given. He possessed no powers. He simply was a costumed detective who sported angel wings on his chest and a pencil mustache on his upper lip. The X-Men's Angel was born with actual white wings, and could fly. He was definitely an improvement over the old Angel, who I believe was inspired by the Saint and had appeared in a one-shot Martin Goodman pulp of his own in 1941. In a twist, the comic book version came first.

There, The Angel—really Gabriel Wilde—fought ordinary criminals in an ordinary topcoat and armed with a gun he called Belshazzar while assisted by an Eskimo named Totem. He lacked the Timely Angel's mustache, but did wear a white domino mask—something the comic book edition lacked. You can understand why *The Angel* pulp lasted only one issue.

He didn't do much better in comics either. Although he was often cover-featured on *Marvel Mystery*, in contrast to the likes of the Human Torch and Sub-Mariner, who possessed real appeal, he just never caught on with readers. The Angel was phased out in 1947, the first long-running Timely hero to go, and a bad omen for the postwar future of superheroes.

I imagine if Goodman ever suggested an Angel revival during the early Silver Age, Lee probably shook his head in surrender, and simply salvaged the name as best he could.

Even the name X-Men had a pulp origin. Back in *CBM* #64 I wrote about the G-Man novel called *The X-Man* which appeared in Goodman's *Star Detective* in 1937. It's such a distinctive title, it's hard to believe that Goodman didn't pull it out of memory and suggest it when he rejected the book's original working title, "The Mutants," back in 1963.

Of course, if you're looking for pulp X-roots, you need look no further than Jommy Cross, the young telepathic mutant protagonist of A. E. van Vogt's 1940 *Astounding Science Fiction* serial, *Slan*. If there was a model for the whole Homo Sapiens versus Homo Superior premise of *The X-Men*, it was that seminal SF novel.

Returning to the Vanisher, I always thought he would have made an interesting addition to Magneto's Brotherhood of Evil Mutants. He was as creepy as the Toad or Mastermind, but possessed an infinitely more useful superpower. But Magneto never recruited him, at least not during the original *X-Men* run, when I was reading it.

Maybe it was because co-starring in the same comic, they would clash. Crimson and purple were their colors. A lot of X-Men villains favored crimson and purple for the same reason that Fantastic Four foes almost always wore green or purple, or purple and green. They were contrasting colors to the Fantastic Four's blue. Crimson and purple naturally opposed the X-Men's blue and gold.

Occasionally, Marvel colorists had problems keeping similarly-colored characters from clashing. In the color sense, that is. This is why two members of Magneto's band, Quicksilver and the Scarlet Witch, were mis-colored blue and green respectively on two early *X-Men* covers. If they'd been correctly colored, they would have blended in with their similarly-hued comrades.

Magneto himself was one of the most intriguing mystery villains of the Silver Age of Marvel Comics. He was unquestionably the X-Men's Dr. Doom. Powerful, regal, imperious, and

THEN IN THE SECLUSION OF HIS STUDY THE MAN WITH THE MIGHTIEST BRAIN ON EARTH PREPARES TO SEARCH FOR SUB-MARINER EVEN AS HIS ARCH-FOE MAGNETO IS DOING
IF ONLY MY PHYSICAL BODY WERE AS FREE AS MY MENTAL IMAGE! BUT EVEN THE GREAT MUTANT POWER OF MY BRAIN IS NOT ENOUGH TO CURE MY HELPLESS FLESH-AND-BLOOD LEGS
BECAUSE IT IS A PROJECTION OF HIS MIND WHICH IS TRAVELLING, IT CAN SURVIVE AS EASILY UNDER THE SEA AS IN THE AIR AND SO THE DRAMATIC SEARCH BEGINS!
IF HE IS ANYWHERE IN THIS AREA I SHOULD BE ABLE TO SENSE HIS PRESENCE!
BUT BEFORE VERY LONG...
I DO SENSE ANOTHER PRESENCE BUT THIS AN EVIL ONE COMING CLOSER AND CLOSER
IT IS MAGNETO! IT CAN BE NO OTHER!
HE TOO MUST WE MEET! IT SHALL BE AT A TIME OF MY OWN CHOOSING! I'LL RETURN TO MY STUDY AND LET MAGNETO FINISH MY QUEST FOR ME!
A SHORT TIME LATER, LITTLE DREAMING THAT PROFESSOR X KNOWS OF HIS PRESENCE MAGNETO APPEARS.
I'M GETTING CLOSER TO SUB-MARINER I CAN FEEL IT!
WHEN I FIND HIM, I MUST BE EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS! HIS POWER MAY EVEN BE THE EQUAL OF MINE! I MUST NEVER PERMIT HIM TO CHALLENGE MY SUPERIORITY!
FINALLY, GUIDED BY THE EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION OF HIS MUTANT BRAIN, MAGNETO SIGHTS HIS OBJECTIVE...
A REGAL CASTLE UNDER THE SEA! I'VE FOUND THE SUB-MARINER!

Professor X and Magneto send their astral counterparts out in search of Sub-Mariner in *X-Men* #6 (Jul 1964, Marvel Comics).

virtually faceless. All you could see of his visage through the T-shaped opening in his Greek-style helmet were his blazing blue eyes, the bridge of his nose, and a slice of mouth.

Lee and Kirby never explored him, never delved into his origin, or explained why, in addition to his mutant magnetic powers, Magneto seemed to possess telepathic powers similar to Professor X. He simply appears in *X-Men* #1 as their arch-nemesis, and kept coming back again and again, often with a team of supporting mutants, during the formative Lee-Kirby period.

At first, he's simply a superhuman magnet. No hint of other mutant powers. But there's a scene in *X-Men* #4, wherein Professor X sends his astral form from his body to rendezvous with Magneto, who also shows up as a disembodied spirit. The two engage in a telepathic argument somewhere in the spiritual stratosphere as if they'd been doing so all along. It always puzzled me. They seemed to know each other pretty well.

But it was no fluke. In *X-Men* #6, Magneto uses this power to search the deep seas for the Sub-Mariner, whom he suspects of being a mutant. In one caption, Lee specifically states that Magneto's "brain power is second only to that of Professor X." Later, he speaks of "the extra-sensory perception of his mutant brain." At the same time the mental Magneto is sweeping the seas for Sub-Mariner, an astral Professor X counterpart is doing the same. Intriguing parallel, as if Lee and Kirby were setting something up.

In *X-Men* #7, when Magneto encounters the Blob, he's unable to mentally probe his mind due to a previous mind-block placed there by Professor X.

As the years passed, this ESP ability was seen less and less. As a matter of fact, so was Magneto, especially after Lee and Kirby surrendered the book to writer Roy Thomas and an ever-changing parade of artists. I've often wondered if this wasn't a direct consequence of having over-used Magneto during the first two years of the title.

Not everyone found Magneto compelling, especially since Lee and Kirby never developed him. I really wish they had. This was the team that made Dr. Doom the most fascinating arch-villain in comics, up to that time, and created such exciting four-color foes as Kang the Conqueror and Loki. What would they have done with him? What face did Jack Kirby envision behind that metallic red-and-purple helmet?

You could expect the unexpected. Kirby shocked fandom when he first suggested that contrary to popular conception, Dr. Doom was not a much-scarred monster, but a pathological perfectionist who suffered only a tiny scratch on his cheek. Such was his all-consuming egotism that Doom couldn't abide this insignificant mark and covered his otherwise-handsome face with a mask of cold iron to avoid the unbearable sight.

I've long puzzled over Magneto's helmet. It's not really a mask, but more like a helm of war. Kirby had an interesting way of creating designs and forgetting to explain them fully—or just forgetting their purpose completely. I once saw an unpublished Kirby concept sketch of Orion of the New Gods that indicated his sharp helmet decorations were meant to suggest high-tech dog ears. In other words, Orion was a war dog.

WE WILL FLEE NOW, IF THE SMALLER BOMB DOESN STOP THE X-MEN, THE LARGE ONE WILL -TAK NG ALL OF SANTO MARCO!
BUT WHAT ABOUT ALL THE INNOCENT PEOPLE THA WILL BE KILLED??
HAVE I NOT TOLD YOU-- THEY ARE MERELY HOMO SAPIENS-- THEY WOULD KILL US IF THEY COULD! WE ONLY FIGHT IN SELF DEFENSE
21

Could it possibly be because he knew it would never work, that Magneto's helmet was designed to be an effective anti-telepathy shield?

Suppose there was more to Magneto's helmet than a disguise? What other purpose could it have served? Well, if you're an evil mutant going up against the telepathic leader of a band of heroic mutants, maybe you needed a helmet configured to shield your mind from psychic invasion. Professor X was always exerting mental control over people and making them do his will. He defeated the Vanisher simply by wiping out all memory of who he was and so denying him all knowledge of his own teleporting powers. The Blob met the same fate.

Xavier never tried this tactic on Magneto. Not once. Could it possibly be because he knew it would never work, that Magneto's helmet was designed to be an effective anti-telepathy shield? Maybe that's what that hornlike device mounted atop his helmet does.

Kirby is no longer around to ask about Magneto. But in a recent interview, Stan Lee admitted that he never properly explored the character, but confessed that "I always wanted Magneto to be Professor X's brother."

That's a fascinating thought. Of course, Lee and Kirby did introduce a half-brother to Xavier in *X-Men* #12. Cain Marko, otherwise the Juggernaut. Maybe that was their first move in the direction of revealing a more startling truth. It's possible that in the early days when the X-Men were still under development, Xavier had another brother, a mutant, possessed of supreme authority over magnetism as well as the extra-sensory powers of his brother.

What if Lee and Kirby had stayed on *X-Men* a little bit longer? Instead of a silver-haired former concentration camp survivor named Erik Lehnsherr (a name not revealed until 1993, 30 years after his debut—although he was walking around helmetless under his middle name of Magnus back in the '70s), perhaps the dreaded Magneto might earlier have been unmasked as someone else, someone closer to Jack Kirby's original undeveloped conception for the character.

Suppose, just suppose, that stylized helmet concealed the ultimate surprise: The cerebral face of Charles Xavier.

Or should I say his equally-bald evil twin?

DR. DOOM COVER APPEARANCES
IN **FANTASTIC FOUR**
AND OTHER OTHER SIXTIES TITLES

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
12¢
THE Fantastic Four
5 JULY
"MEET... DOCTOR DOOM!"
WITH A TURN OF THIS DIAL, I SHALL DESTROY THE FOUR OF YOU, FOREVER!!
I'VE GOT TO REACH HIM! HE'S DRAINING THE AIR OUT OF THE ROOM! I CAN'T BREATHE! MY--MY STRENGTH IS EBBING!
AIR!! I GOTTA HAVE AIR!
MY FLAME IS DYING WITHOUT OXYGEN! I'M HELPLESS!
I MUST GET IN TO SAVE THEM! BUT HOW? HOW??

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
12¢
THE Fantastic Four
6 SEPT.
HAVE THE FANTASTIC FOUR AT LAST MET THEIR MATCH WHEN MIGHTY SUB-MARINER AND EVIL DOCTOR DOOM TEAM UP?? DON'T MISS "the DIABOLICAL DUO JOIN FORCES!"
THE TIME HAS COME, SUB-MARINER! DESTROY THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
NO MATTER WHAT POWERS YOU BOTH HAVE, WE SHALL DEFEAT YOU! THE FANTASTIC FOUR SWEAR IT!

First appearance of Dr. Doom, #5 (Jul 1962). Kirby/Sinnott.

Titanic team-up in #6 (Sep 1962). Kirby/Ayers.

The first return, #10 (Jan 1963). Kirby/Ayers.

The second return, #16 (Jul 1963). Kirby/Ayers.

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
12¢
THE Fantastic Four
10 JAN.
HOLD YOUR BREATH!! HERE IS... "THE RETURN OF DOCTOR DOOM!"
HOW'S THIS FOR A TWIST, JACK? WE'VE GOT DOCTOR DOOM AS ONE OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR!!
...AND MISTER FANTASTIC HIMSELF IS THE VILLAIN!! OUR FANS OUGHTTA FLIP OVER THIS YARN!!
IN THIS EPIC ISSUE! SURPRISE ALWAYS ACTUALLY, MORE LEE AND KIRBY IN THE STORY!! PLUS: A GORGEOUS PIN-UP OF THE INVISIBLE GIRL!

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
Fantastic Four
16 JULY
SPECIAL SURPRISE GUEST STAR: ANT-MAN
THE RETURN OF DOCTOR DOOM!
THE WORLD'S MOST AMAZING SUPER-VILLAIN!!
VISIT THE MYSTERIOUS MICRO-WORLD of DOCTOR DOOM!!

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
Fantastic Four
"IN THE CLUTCHES OF DOCTOR DOOM!"
CAN AMERICA'S MOST COLORFUL SUPER-COMBO ESCAPE FROM...
THE MENACE OF THE MOVING RAGS!
THE THREAT OF THE SW'RLING CEMENT!
THE PANIC OF THE DEADLY WHIRLWIND!
THE PERIL OF THE ROOM WITHOUT A FLOOR!
MARVEL COMICS GROUP USHERS IN "THE MARVEL AGE OF COMICS!"

72 BIG PAGES ANNUAL
Fantastic Four
FEATURING A DOUBLE-LENGTH SUPER-SUSPENSE "THE FINAL VICTORY OF DOCTOR DOOM!"
SEE: IN ALL ITS PULSE-POUNDING SUSPENSE, THE NEVER-BEFORE REVEALED ORIGIN OF DR. DOOM!

#17 (Jul 62), Kirby/Ayers.

#23 (Feb 64), Kirby/Roussos.

Annual #2 (1964), Kirby/Stone.

Fantastic Four
DOCTOR DOOM MORE DIABOLICAL, MORE DEADLY THAN EVER BEFORE!
THE BATTLE OF THE BAXTER BUILDING!
DON'T MISS THE THING'S EPIC HAND-TO-HAND FIGHT WITH DESPERATE DR.DOOM!

#39 (Jun 65), Kirby/Stone.

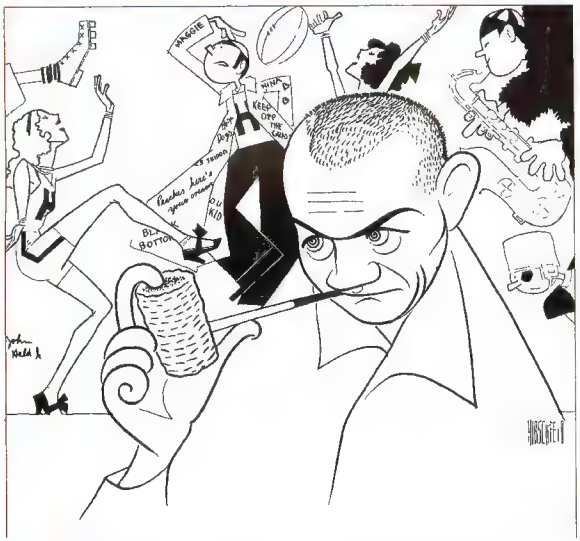
#40 (Jul 65), Kirby/Giacoia.

Avengers #2 (Feb 66), Kirby/Ayers.

DD #37 (Feb 68), Colan/Gaicoia.

DD #38 (Mar 68), Colan/Giacoia.

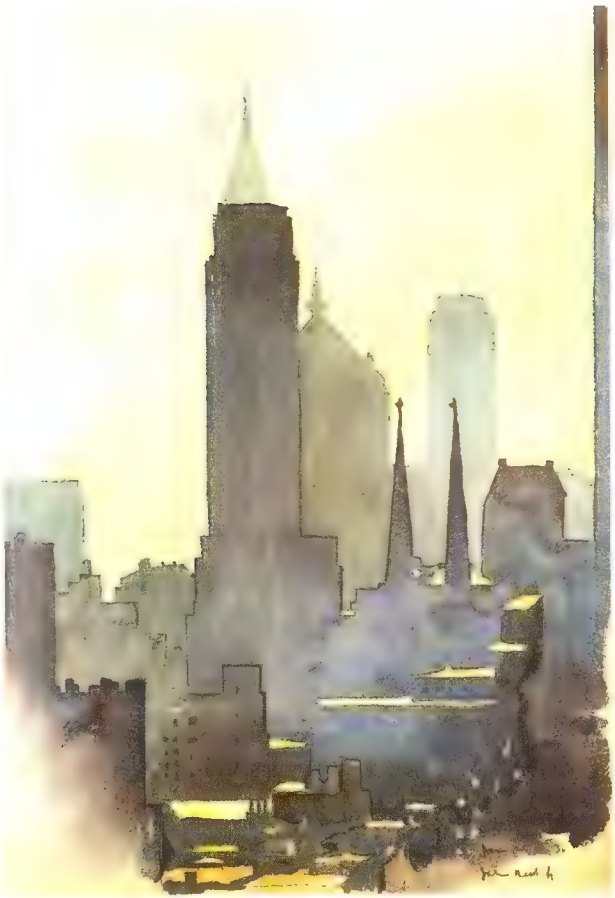
Hulk #144 (Oct 71), Trimpe/Severin.



(clockwise from upper left) Not all of Held's work in the 1920s consisted of skinny flappers; two **Life** covers in which he achieves genuine glamour. Hirschfeld's caricature of his old friend. A color Held cartoon from **Held's Angels** (1952), re-creating the 1920s.

(above) Some of Held's paintings in the 1930s evoked his 1920s style but in Western themes (entitled "August Night Scene and Cattle").

(below and next page) Held's watercolors of New York skylines display a sure touch for the medium.



Held in the 1940s, gentleman farmer.

John Held, Jr:
Cartoonist as God

John Held, Jr. is arguably the most powerful cartoonist the print medium has ever seen. He co-created, it is often alleged, an entire decade of American history. The period of exuberant decadence that has entered American mythology yclept "the roaring twenties" was conjured up, according to ample testimony on the matter, by F. Scott Fitzgerald, a novelist, and Held, a cartoonist.

Fitzgerald's 1920 novel, *This Side of Paradise*, captured the spirit of disillusioned ennui and impertinent disregard for convention that infected the joy-riding Younger Generation in post-World War I America. And Held's drawings of spindle-shanked flappers and bell-bottomed sheiks of a few years later became the iconography of what Fitzgerald had christened the Jazz Age. No novelist, and certainly no cartoonist, had ever done the like before. Or since.

Together, they put into words and pictures the feelings and tendencies then bubbling to the surface in American life. They gave to the airy nothings of such insubstantialities the imagery that completed the birth process.

And if there is any single image that epitomizes the era it is not the gangster or the funereal Mr. Dry in Rollin Kirby's anti-Prohibition editorial cartoons; it is that effervescent bundle of giddy self-assurance, girlish laughter and unabashed sex appeal—the flapper. The visual symbol of the flapper did not appear widely until she was an accepted type—that is, until about 1922 or so; but she had become a familiar social phenomenon long before then. The typical flapper was a nice girl who was a little fast ("brazen and at least capable of sin if not actually guilty of it," as Shelly Armitage says in her biography of Held).

The flapper offended the Older Generation because she defied accepted conventions of decorous feminine behavior. Women's hair had always been long; the flapper wore hers short—"bobbed." She used make-up (which she often applied in public!). She wore tight, short dresses, which bared her arms and her legs from the knees down; underneath, she wore as little as possible. But she did more than symbolize the revolution in feminine fashion and mores: she also embodied the spirit of the times in a way no other figure did.

And John Held, Jr., a mere cartoonist, did more to create this revolutionary icon than anyone else. And in the brevity and brilliance of his career, he enacted in his life the meteoric character of the Age of Flaming Youth that he so deftly illustrated with his pen.

Held in the 1920s.

"I KNOW A DUCK OF A SPEAKEASY ON EAST FIFTY-THIRD STREET"

Instead of displaying the traditional array of Held's belles from the 1920s, we've selected samples of his work from drawings that appeared originally as illustrations in one of Held's several short story collections— **Grim Youth, Bowl of Cherries, The Flesh Is Weak**. While these books were published in the 1930s, they concerned life among the Young in the "roaring twenties," and their illustrations therefore typify the drawing style that made Held famous. But the illustrations are not cartoons, and the captions are taken from the story text and are not intended as jokes.

Held was born January 10, 1889, in the unlikeliest of places—Salt Lake City, Utah, in a two-room adobe house with a lean-to kitchen. His father, John Held, Sr., was an artist and engraver and amateur bandmaster—and something of an eccentric; and his mother, Annie Evans Held, was active in local theatrical endeavors.

Held began sketching and painting at a very early age, and at the age of nine, he was paid for a block print he produced, his first earnings as an artist. He attended both elementary school and high school but finished neither; in high school, he worked on the school paper with Harold Ross (destined to found *The New Yorker* in 1925), and by the time he was fourteen, he was cartooning for the *Salt Lake City Tribune*, where Ross also found employment as a reporter.

In their off hours, the two sometimes toured the Stockade, the city's red light district, where they acquired an education in the seamier side of society. In this, they may have followed in the footsteps of Held's uncle Pierre, who first introduced young John to the Stockade. Pierre was an electrician and handyman, and he wired the district—installing electrical doorbells in the houses of ill repute. Armitage speculates that his perceiving the contrast between the noble vision of his Mormon faith and the seedy life of the Stockade fostered the cartoonist's comic sensibility.

In 1908, Held married the *Tribune's* society editor, Myrtle Jennings, and sold his first cartoon to the humor magazine *Life*. Two years later, he left Utah with $4 in his pocket and went to New York City to become a serious artist. Intending to send for his wife once he became established, he studied and lived with the sculptor Mahonri M. Young (one of Brigham Young's 160-some grandsons) for a short while.

But when the need to earn a livelihood became urgent, he found work at the Collier's Street Railway Advertising Company, doing posters. Soon he left to become a display designer for the United Lithographic Corporation, where he stayed for over a year.

When Myrtle joined him, she transformed his life. She saw commercial value in the comic sketches he made after hours, and she took them around to magazines and sold them to *Vanity Fair, Life, Smart Set* and *Judge*. From 1912 until 1916, Held's cartoons in *Vanity Fair* were signed "Myrtle Held" or "Babette" because editor Frank Crowninshield mistakenly supposed she had drawn the cartoons she was peddling—and she, rather than give a tedious explanation about her diffident husband, had played along, signing her name to Held's unsigned work.

In 1913, Held joined the art department at John Wanamaker Company, continuing at the same time to freelance illustrations and cartoons to various magazines, resulting, in 1915-16, in a series of covers for *Smart Set*. In 1916, he made a trip to Arizona for several months with Young (who Held regarded as one of the two most important influences on his artistic life, the other being his father).

By the time he returned (probably in the fall), his marriage was on the rocks; Held took a room with four other youths in a rooming house on West 37th Street—Red Smith (but not the sports writer), Hal Burrows, Paul Perez and Marc Connelly. Connelly later wrote of their adventures in a piece entitled "The Doings at Cockroach Glades," the name of the place inspired by the non-paying residents that shared the accommodations.

There were sleeping facilities for only four persons, but since Smith worked nights, he slept days, leaving the beds free for the remaining quartet at night. "When I joined the Glades' inhabitants," Connelly wrote of that cold winter, "John and Hal were using the room in the daytime as a studio. Bundled up with scarves and sweaters, the two young men sat by the drafty windows, their drawing boards propped against the kitchen table between them, both engaged in making colored portraits of onions, asparagus, tomatoes and ears of corn for a seed company's catalogue. John's vegetables brought him enough livelihood to allow him time to work on sculpture. As I remember, he won one or two modest prizes offered in contests for animals and human figures carved from cakes of Ivory Soap. I thought John's were beautiful."

When the U.S. entered World War I in April 1917, one of Held's artist friends, Ernest Haskell, was commissioned to help develop the new science of camouflage. One day when Held and Connelly visited Haskell on leave at his digs, Haskell regaled them with the remarkable achievements of the Camouflage Corps:

"We can paint battle ships in such a way that at sea they seem invisible a mile away—or even less," Connelly quotes Haskell as saying. "We're also devising

camouflage for artillery concealment and even uniforms."

Promising to show them a raincoat that "a Heinie can't recognize two hundred yards away," Haskell disappeared for a moment "and reappeared wearing a doughboy helmet and a raincoat, both painted with a dadaistic confusion of reds, greens, yellows, blues and browns. He stood six-foot-two and now gave the appearance of a nightmarish Pierrot," Connelly said. "While the rest of us stared at his weird appearance, Held stretched out his hands like a man groping in the dark: "My God!" he exclaimed, "Where's Ernie?" About this time, Held was hired as an artist on a Carnegie Institute archeological expedition to Central America. From July 1917 until May 1918, Held documented the explorations by making maps and paintings and sketches of the sites they visited. He also kept an eye out for German U-boats: for a salary of $1,200 a year, he was secretly working for Naval Intelligence.

When he returned to New York, Held resumed his freelance career, and before the end of the year, he was selling cartoons and covers regularly to *Judge, Life, Puck* and *Vanity Fair.*

Before his trip to Central America, Held's style of drawing was rather conventional for the time, distinguished by a spider-web line, elongated and somewhat stiffly stylized figures, and lavish use of solid black and geometric patterns. After the trip, Held's cartoons assumed a quite different appearance: although still employing a fragile line and solid black shapes, Held now produced plumper figures with disproportionately large round heads, a maneuver that made the people in his drawings seem youthful, almost childlike. Henceforth, Held began to specialize in cartoons about young people.

Endpaper decorations for one of Held's books, again typifying the style that set the fashion for the "roaring twenties."

Whether by accident or conscious design, this choice of subjects placed Held in the public eye at precisely the right moment: a Youth Culture was emerging in America in the post-war years, and Held was soon seen as their spokesman, capturing their insouciance with the simple elegance of his line.

His style continued to evolve, however, and his characters became more realistically proportioned until about 1925, when the style for which he is most remembered reached its maturity. Skinny approximations of their sex, Held's belles were emblematic of a sort of perpetual adolescence. As skirts became shorter, he exaggerated the effect by making his girls' legs longer and slenderer, giving them the gangling coltish appearance of youth. And so the apotheosis of the flapper was achieved.

Humorist Corey Ford maintained that

"THERE IS A YOUNG LADY HERE THAT IS CRAZY TO MEET YOU"

Another exemplar of Held's 1920s fashion-setting drawing style.

Held actually invented the flapper by supplying the Young with a prototype: "Each new Held drawing was pored over like a Paris fashion plate, girls cropped their hair and rouged their cheeks and shortened their skirts to be in style, galoshes and raccoon coats were indispensable to every male undergraduate wardrobe. So sedulously did we ape his caricatures that they lost their satiric point and came to be a documentary record of our times."

Without question, Held delineated the spirit of the 1920s. More than any other cartoonist, Held captured in his graphic abstractions the fashions and fads of the collegiate jazz age. His leggy flappers with noses in the air and hose rolled at the knee and his bell-bottomed sheiks with their hair plastered tight to cue-ball heads personified the Younger Generation to a nation of readers. Sophisticated and vaguely dissolute, his scantily skirted cuties were insatiable neckers, and their tuxedo-clad escorts inveterate social bootleggers, a flask on every hip. And the drawings were rendered with matching élan—delicate, thin lines in bold contrast against arresting solid blacks.

Susan E. Meyer in *America's Great Illustrators* notes that Held's work was unique: he "knew no predecessors…. His work was idiosyncratic, bearing no stylistic resemblance to that of any other

Held slaving away in the 1920s.

artist before him." Walt Reed, historian of American illustration, agreed: "Held is impossible to pigeonhole. His style did not grow out of anybody else's, and no one followed him. He was unique. His style evolved steadily from the one-eyed doll-like figures of 1919, growing into much more sophisticated creations. They remained unique."

But Held's great friend, the theatrical caricaturist Al Hirschfeld, saw "early influences [in] pre-Columbian sculpture and the drawings on Greek vases, as well as the highly stylized thin-line drawings in *La Vie Parisienne*, a profusely illustrated French weekly," which, "over the years," Held developed into "his own thumb-print" style.

Held's drawings appeared regularly throughout the Roaring Twenties in all the most popular magazines. He did cartoons, advertisements, and covers. In 1924, Held started a weekly half-page comic strip called *Oh! Margy!* for United Feature Syndicate. Lured away to King Features in 1927, Held continued the feature under an assortment of titles (*Merely Margie* and *Rah Rah Rosalie* among others) until the mid-thirties.

EASILY ANSWERED

***Sadie*—With the French at war, what will we do for our new fashions?**

***Minnie*—We'll always be sure to be in style if we wear just a little less.**

Held's early, pre-war stiff and stilted style—here from the humor magazine **Judge**, 1913.

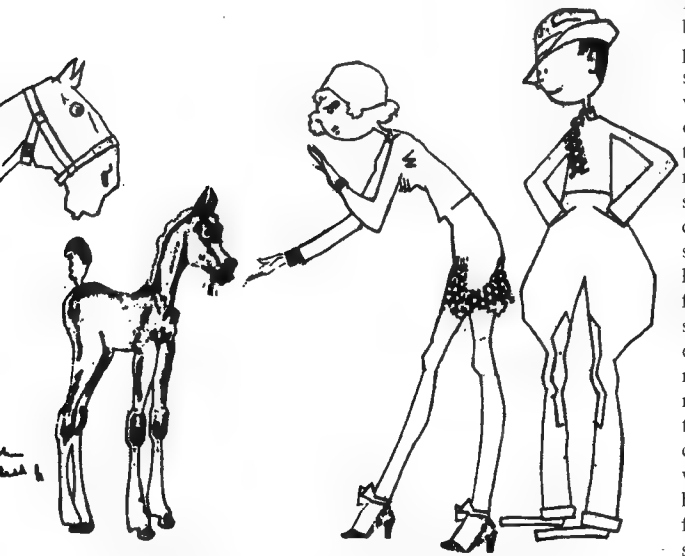
Winning the War in the Movies

Drawn by John Held

Our leading vamp has abandoned the leopard skin for the Stars and Stripes.

The first step in the evolution of the Held style was the so-called "one-eyed" girl, c. 1918.

And in 1925, for Ross's infant *New Yorker,* he began producing a series of woodcut-like drawings of the "gay nineties," a sharp departure in style from his more familiar style on display in nearly every magazine of the day. The cartoonist was giving his old friend something completely different, something entirely new, in the Held oeuvre, but something ironically apropos. Fashioned from his fond recollections of the demimonde of whores, pimps, gamblers, and lenient cops of turn-of-the-century Salt Lake City's Stockade, these cartoons reflected obliquely upon the manners and mores of Flaming Youth in the 1920s.



"I think that colts are just too comical—they seem to be all legs."

The mature Held style in a cartoon from the old humor magazine, **Life**.

Held was well-known and wealthy by 1921. He had moved to Westport, Connecticut, as early as 1919; there, he had purchased a small working farm called Grindstone Hill Farm. At one time during the decade, he also had a penthouse in Manhattan, a beach house in Florida and a second country estate (this one, 163 acres) in Connecticut where he played at being a gentleman farmer, maintaining a kennel of blooded dogs, a stable of blue ribbon saddle horses and a staff of dozens of servants—a golf pro for his golf course, a Chinese cook, farm hands and a menagerie keeper for the dogs and peacocks and a pair of mules named Abercrombie and Fitch.

His domestic life, however, was not successful: he had divorced his first wife in 1919 and married Ada "Johnnie" Johnson, a woman animated very much by the spirit of the Jazz Age, whose frequent demand for lavish and populous

Let the moths shift for themselves. Summer's furs are winter's necessities

In Cuba there is warmth

In the last phase before his style matured, Held drew plumper, round-headed youths, here from **Judge** in 1923.

house parties kept her husband working almost all the time. The work ethic of his Mormon upbringing very much operative in his mind, Held was an absentee merry-maker: while his wife and friends partied through the nights, he hunched over his drawing board to earn the money that financed the fun. (It was to escape the milling of her throngs of house guests and the commotion of her parties that led Held to purchase his second Connecticut farm in 1924.)

At the peak of his fame from 1923 until the end of the decade, Held could earn thousands of dollars with a single drawing; editors begged for his work. "I used to work all day, days and nights," he recalled in a mid-1950s interview. "Nobody believes me now, when I tell this, but people used to send me blank checks to make drawings for them. I could write in my own price."

Hirschfeld tells of watching Held open his morning mail—each of twenty or thirty envelopes containing a check for hundreds or thousands of dollars. But Johnnie was apparently as proficient at spending it as Held was at earning it.

Luckily, Held was a fast worker. By mid-day at his studio in Manhattan (a one-room apartment), he would complete twenty drawings. Then he'd desert the drawing board for the groaning board, having lunch at the Coffee House Club or Jim Moriarty's speakeasy or the "Round Table" at the Algonquin. His luncheon companions included the range of 1920s celebrities—Lucius Beebe, Nelson Doubleday, Rockwell Kent, Don Marquis, Rube Goldberg, Dorothy Parker, Robert Benchley, Alexander Woollcott, and so on.

Despite the glitter of his daily routine, Held was a prisoner of his fame. Hirschfeld recalled Held's coming to see him off when he embarked on his first voyage to Paris in 1924. As Held handed his friend a bottle of champagne, he said:

"Gosh, how I envy you, Al. I would give anything to just get up and go."

Hirschfeld, who had his life savings, $500, pinned to the inside of his jacket, couldn't imagine why Held didn't just take off.

"You could buy this tub and take it anywhere you wanted," he said.

Held stared at him.

"I can't do it," he said. "I have a whole crew of people in Connecticut and Florida depending on me."

He paused for a long time and then fixed his eye upon his friend and said: "Don't, for God's sake, ever earn more than you need to live on. Try not to be too successful."

But Held wasn't always successful. His political career, for instance, after a brilliant start, faltered. He was elected constable in Weston in 1922 and then, in 1926, was persuaded to run as a Democrat for U.S. Congress from Fairfield County. He ran but he did not campaign: he was too busy, he said, but if anyone was interested in his political views, they could find him at his farm.

His platform was appropriate: "I intend to devote my attention first to the *Congressional Record*. Here is a magazine that needs new blood! I'll do the covers myself."

Alas, he was not elected. The *Congressional Record* continued in its stodgy rut, and Held continued in his rut, too, a much more gaily decorated one, and we are the richer as a culture for his political failure.

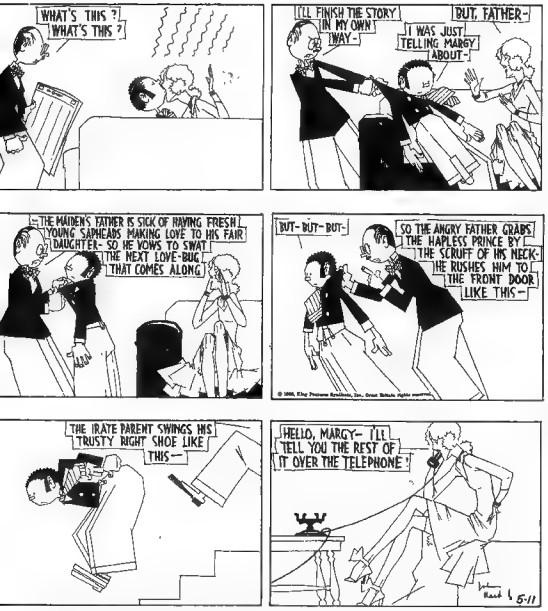
And then came the stock market crash in late 1929 and the aftermath in which Held lost a fortune he had invested with Ivar Kreuger, the Swedish match king. He would also soon lose his syndicate contract: in the grimmer climate of the Depression, his silly flapper cartoons seemed out-of-step. Magazine editors stopped commissioning covers. But the bills still demanded payment.

The accumulated pressure took its toll: by March 1931, Held was in a Stamford sanitarium suffering from nervous exhaustion. Later that year, he separated from his second wife and their three adopted children; they were divorced in Mexico in September, and she took possession of all their houses.

On November 11, Held married Gladys Moore, a Ziegfield Follies girl he

Blockprint, 13-5/8 x 11-5/8": *The New Yorker*, October 27, 1928: Collection of Mrs. John Held Jr.

One of Held's woodblock-style prints that he created for Harold Ross' new magazine, **The New Yorker**, in order to give his old friend something that would be, from Held, untypical.


WHAT'S THIS ?
WHAT'S THIS ?
I'LL FINISH THE STORY IN MY OWN WAY-
BUT, FATHER-
I WAS JUST TELLING MARGY ABOUT-
THE MAIDEN'S FATHER IS SICK OF RAVING FRESH YOUNG SAPHEADS MAKING LOVE TO HIS FAIR DAUGHTER- SO HE VOWS TO SWAT THE NEXT LOVE-BUG THAT COMES ALONG
BUT- BUT- BUT-
SO THE ANGRY FATHER GRABS THE HAPLESS PRINCE BY THE SCRUFF OF HIS NECK- HE RUSHES HIM TO THE FRONT DOOR LIKE THIS-
THE IRATE PARENT SWINGS HIS TRUSTY RIGHT SHOE LIKE THIS-
HELLO, MARGY- I'LL TELL YOU THE REST OF IT OVER THE TELEPHONE !

One of Held's syndicated **Margy** newspaper comic strips, this one from c. 1930.

had met while judging a beauty contest in 1927. Gladys preferred the social life of the smart set in the city while Held yearned for the country life; they separated in 1936, having produced a daughter, Judy.

In the 1930s, Held's spherical-headed sheiks and shebas lost their appeal; perhaps they reminded a Depression-wracked audience too vividly of the bubble that had burst. Hirschfeld believed his friend was destroyed by the very thing that had made him a success, the fickle spirit of fashion:

"The long skirt imported from Paris did it," Hirschfeld explained. "Held's drawing of a girl in a long dress was ludicrous. Russell Patterson [the other iconographer of the Twenties—responsible for introducing the raccoon coat and galoshes] replaced Held's flapper with a cleverly drawn anatomically persuasive girl in tight-fitting, transparent long dress."

Unable to sell cartoons, Held began writing short stories about those bygone days of Jazz Age, selling them to *Scribner's, Harper's* and *College Humor.* Between 1930 and 1937, he collected them in four volumes and wrote four novels, also about life in the 1920s.

Often bleak in the naturalistic manner, Held's narratives (some of which he also illustrated) aimed at exposing the shallowness of the Flaming Youth of yesteryear. Written in terse, spare prose, his stories and novels display a fine eye for authentic detail, but they are ultimately depressing, not amusing: here in naked prose, his satiric view predominates and overwhelms while in his pictures of the previous decade, humor outshines the satiric irony. Animated chiefly by dialogue (the hallmark of the cartoonist), his prose fiction was critically shunned and never achieved the popularity of his cartoons and drawings.

In the *Smithsonian* for September 1986, Dorothy and John Tarrant record a telling episode from this, the nadir of Held's professional life:

One day, Held ran into Russell Patterson, who had, by then, replaced Held at the pinnacle of popular acclaim. Patterson offered to get Held the lucrative assignment of designing Macy's Christmas-toy window. Held, doubtless recalling the advice he'd given Hirschfeld years before, declined, saying he had a room, a coat, some shirts, trousers and a pair of shoes. That was all a man needed, he said.

Patterson said, "We'll get together again. I'll call."

"I have no phone," said Held.

Less than a popular success during the thirties, Held was to experience his greatest artistic satisfaction during this and the following decade. He illustrated several books, produced and hosted a collegiate talent radio program ("Tops Variety Show"), designed sets for the successful Broadway comedy *Hellzapoppin*, and became (at last) a serious artist in watercolor and bronze.

His subjects in watercolor were New York skylines (in transparent watercolors) and Western scenes of ranch life (in opaque watercolors), populated by figures reminiscent of his round-headed cartoons of the past; in bronze, he did animals as well as people, mostly in the Western mode. In 1940, he was artist in residence at Harvard University and then at the University of Georgia, both funded by a Carnegie Corporation grant.

On December 23, 1942, Held married Margaret Schuyler Janes, and during World War II, they both worked for the Signal Corps, making pictures of radar apparatus then being designed. In 1943, they purchased the Conover Farm near Belmar, New Jersey, where Held became, again, a farmer. But this time, for a living.

They raised crops and sold produce, preserves, and the bread that Maggie

BET YOU WISH YOU WERE OUT IN THE PARKIN' WITH A GIRL, MAYBE KISSIN' HER"

Another Held book illustration, typical of his brilliantly black-and-white art in the 1920s. Note the expert treatment of the girl's dress here, brittle lines suggesting frilliness.

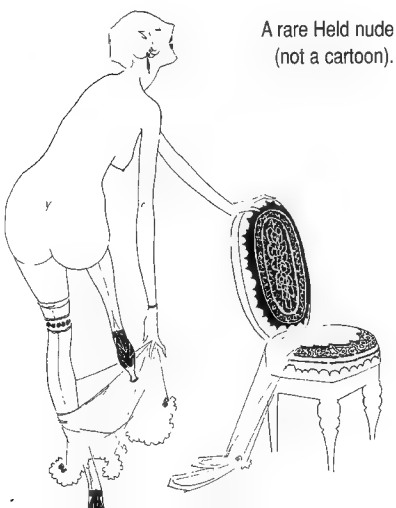
When long, flowing gowns came back into fashion, Russell Patterson adapted; but Held could not.

baked. The farm population included goats, geese, ducks, chickens, a burro and a dog named Mr. Dooley "who did not know he was a dog."

Held occasionally did magazine illustrations, and he produced several children's stories. Before he died on the farm of throat cancer on March 2, 1958, he had been "rediscovered" and enjoyed considerable reputation. Galleries displayed his paintings, magazines carried articles about him and printed his drawings, and social historians examined his work in the hopes of explaining the 1920s.

A satirist whose comedy depended upon irony, Held's career is itself riddled with ironies. Aspiring to be a serious artist and sculptor, he achieved fame and fortune beyond his most extravagant expectations with simple cartoon drawings, undertaken initially to earn enough money to support his other artistic ambitions. His success was so great that he was imprisoned by it; only economic and personal disaster, a collapsing stock market and a nervous breakdown, freed him to resume artistic pursuits.

The supreme irony, however, was that his cartoons of the twenties, caricatures which he intended as satirical comment on the faddish foibles of Youth, became instead their fashion bible and brought him wealth and celebrity; but his fiction of the thirties, satirical of the very era his cartoons had helped to create, was scorned. His place in the pantheon of American cartoonists is nevertheless secure: his cartoons virtually define that period now known as the Roaring Twenties.



A rare Held nude (not a cartoon).

World's Greatest Villain

[continued from page 23]

archenemy (in the aforementioned *Fantastic Four* #10) or trapping the Fantastic Four in a microscopic kingdom he had seized control of (*Fantastic Four* #16). In many ways though, had this cycle continued (Doom shows up, Doom challenges F.F. with his latest scientific device or elaborate scheme, F.F. send Doom packing), the character would have become old hat. After all, Doom was painted as a genius, a very determined, demented genius mind you, but so were a lot of other villains in comics. A mad genius, regardless of how elaborate his plans are, will get dull pretty fast if that is all there is to him. The first stories that Lee and Kirby did only hinted at the larger scope of the character. Also, despite the image of him in his armor and robes, the character lacked a lot of the pizzazz that would come with refinement and fine-tuning. Like all good characters, evolution comes over time and although the early appearances of Dr. Doom are classics, they are only vague signs of the greatness of Dr. Doom that was to be revealed later on down the road. In my mind, there was one comic in particular that took a big step toward turning Dr. Doom into the character we know today, and spared him from becoming merely Marvel's answer to Lex Luthor.

That comic was *Fantastic Four Annual* #2. This comic featured a more detailed origin of Dr. Doom and really expanded upon the condensed, shorthand origin that came from his first appearance. In this comic, readers learned finally about Latveria, the small European nation that Dr. Doom had become the ruler of (which automatically gave him something that was greater than any weapon or object of magic in his later stories, diplomatic immunity). For the first time also, Dr. Doom's gypsy background was revealed. The readers learned how his father, a healer amongst the gypsies, failed to save the wife of a local baron. Angered by the healer's inability to save his wife, the baron sent his men to the Von Dooms' camp and had the troops tear it apart in a search for the healer and his young son. The origin story also recounted how Doom's father fled from the baron's troops, not so much for his own safety, but for fear of what might happen to his child if the troops captured him and punished the boy for his failure. In the end, the elder Von Doom managed to keep his son alive, but the cost was his own life. In the end, Victor Von Doom could do nothing but stand by and watch his father die.

After losing his father, Von Doom began to rationalize in his mind that it was his father's gentle soul and kindness that had done him in. For the first time, a clear motivation for Doom's treachery and his viciousness emerged. Indeed, the young Victor Von Doom had been taught what he thought was a harsh lesson early on in life, "No good deed goes unpunished." It seems to be the credo by which Dr. Doom lives today. This aspect of Dr. Doom's personality helped to infuse him with depth and character. For the first time in comics, it wasn't just about a crook getting powers and deciding to become a bad guy. It wasn't just about surviving an accident, or going wacky and putting on the spandex to do battle with the local masked avenger. With this comic, Lee and Kirby had presented a super villain that many people could relate to and understand and perhaps even sympathize with. Finally, there was a villain with his own sense of pain and loss and emotions (even though his emotions were as repressed as you could get). For the first time, comic book readers saw a villain that could be, and often times was, more exciting and dynamic than the heroes he faced off with.

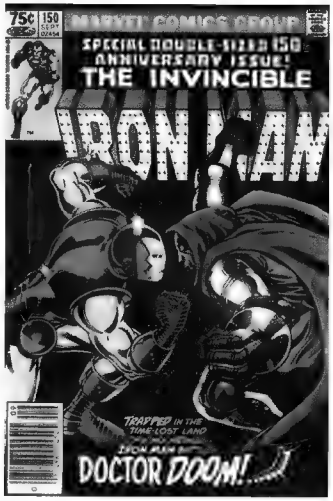
Also in this landmark issue, readers got to see another aspect of Doom that none could have ever guessed at, the benevolent and twisted nobility of the man who would be king of the world. Up until that point, the Dr. Doom that was presented was one who was hell-bent on world conquest and, except for his disfigurement, that was really all there was to him. Now, we saw the Dr. Doom who, as a young man, used his gift for science to trick the nobles of his country and rob them of their wealth so that he could help the poor. We also saw a young Victor Von Doom whose scientific marvels and advanced technology was used to keep the authorities at bay so that they could never again get the chance to harm any of his people the way they did his father. It has been said that the most engaging and believable villains are men and women who don't see themselves as evil. These would be characters who, in

their hearts and minds, feel that what they do, by any means necessary and no matter how misguided it seems to the rest of the world, is the right thing. This is how it was with Dr. Doom. With this comic book, he wasn't just the enemy of the Fantastic Four anymore. Now Dr. Doom was also the man who had seized power in Latveria and turned it from a corrupt monarchy into a controlled police state where, while there might not be a lot of freedom, there was peace and security under the metal clad hand of the Master, as his loyal subjects knew him. As Doom said in *Fantastic Four* #247, after the Fantastic Four see what becomes of Latveria after Doom was removed from power (in *Fantastic Four* #200), all he ever asked of his subjects was that they be "obedient and happy." In that same issue, artist and writer John Byrne showed that when Doom had been thrown out of power and the brother of the rightful king of Latveria, Zorba, was placed on the country's throne, Latveria was thrown into chaos. Without the stabilizing effect of Doom being there, the small European nation began to know crime, poverty and fear for the first time in years. While there was no more of Doom's heavy handed laws over the heads of his people, the swift and terrible punishment that came to those who defied Doom's law and broke the peace also were gone, and the results were terrible for the small nation. Only by putting Doom back on the throne could order be restored. Also, interestingly enough, Doom's desire to regain his power wasn't motivated so much by the fact that he wanted to lead Latveria again, but by his sadness that his subjects now suffered at the hands of a fool.

The origin of Dr. Doom that was presented in *Fantastic Four Annual* #2 also delved further into young Victor's fascination with the occult and magic after he inherited his mother's belongings and learned that she had been a witch. This too became the underlining trademark of the character, his quest of knowledge in the world of science and the realm of magic and his desire to one day marry these two together in the hopes of mastering both of them.

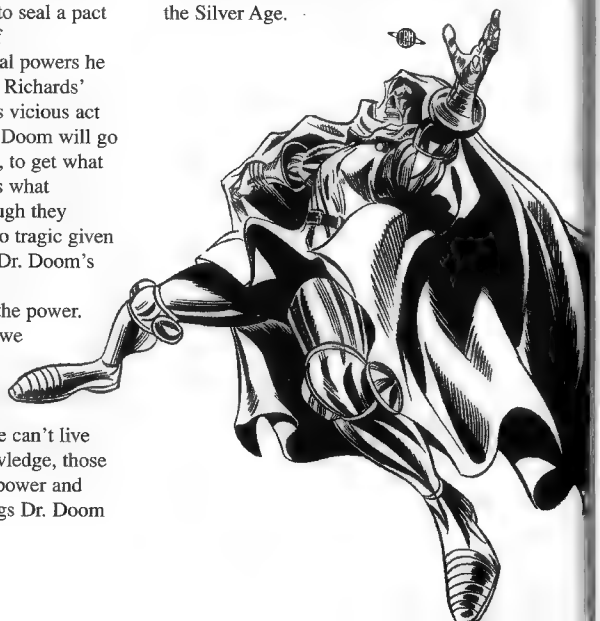
Going back to the issue of betrayal at the hands of Doom, there have been numerous stories published that illustrate just how willing Doom is to backstab his allies at the drop of a hat. Given the ego of this character, he sees everyone as a means to his end (in this case, destroying the Fantastic Four). That alone makes the character ruthless. What makes Dr. Doom truly dangerous though, is how willing he is to use the people who love him to get what he wants. When a woman who is under the protection of Doom is killed in the aforementioned *Fantastic Four* #247, Doom takes in her young son, Kristoff Vernard. At first it seems as if the ruler of Latveria has adopted the boy as an act of kindness. This act of charity has a sinister motivation though. Later, Doom's plans for the boy are made clear in *Fantastic Four* #278. When Doom is believed dead, Kristoff is programmed to think he is Dr. Doom by the Master's ever faithful Doombots so that he can carry on his adopted father's vendetta against the Fantastic Four. More recently, in *Fantastic Four* #496, in a tale that led up to the Fantastic Four's 500th issue, writer Mark Waid shows how Doom tracked down the lost love of his youth, Valeria. After finally getting her to profess that she could still find it in her heart to love him, Doom coldly sacrifices her to seal a pact he had made with a cabal of netherdemons for the magical powers he felt he would need to defeat Richards' science. More than ever, this vicious act illustrated just what lengths Doom will go to, and just who he'll betray, to get what he wants. If one understands what motivates these actions, though they appear heartless they are also tragic given the fact that it is not within Dr. Doom's heart to care about anyone.

In the end, it's all about the power. After all, people die. Those we care about can be killed and taken from us, so it is easier to never bother caring about anyone to begin with. People can't live forever. But power and knowledge, those can be eternal. That is why power and knowledge are the only things Dr. Doom cares about.



Rematch of the ironclads (Sep 81).

Since the days when Stan Lee and Jack Kirby left *Fantastic Four*, the comic has experienced various highs and lows in its forty-some years of existence. The book has ranged from fair to brilliant at times, depending on who was writing and drawing it. I have found that the best way to observe if the book is being done right is by looking at how well the creators on the book handle Dr. Doom. In a way, he has become not only the benchmark for the team's enemies, but also for the success or failure of the book. In the days since Lee and Kirby, Dr. Doom has been examined and re-examined and new layers added to him by some of the best writers and artists in the field. Each new creator who gets it right realizes that who your enemies are says a lot about you. In this case, the Fantastic Four who star in the World's Greatest Comic Magazine are the team of super-heroes that they are because they have the World's Greatest Comic Villain, who also just happens to be one of the Great Comic Villains of the Silver Age.



CBM *Interview*

[continued from page 27]

Starlin: Oh, that's just the first issue! [General laughter] Yeah. The rest of it is him getting used to his relationship with the Dark Paladin, who comes to him in his dreams, learning his powers, and dealing with the Genociders.

CBM: It sounds like you've got some big plans for Mr. Torres.

Starlin: Yes. This is the first of a number of miniseries that I want to do involving this [character]. My hope is to be able to create something like Alan Moore and Kevin O'Neill do with *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, except I'll try to put out a six issue miniseries once every nine months. So that you'll be getting these things as installments of a novel, a brick of six every time you turn around.

CBM: Does that format not only appeal, but does it also make sense to you?

Starlin: It does, in the fact that I cannot pull off a monthly book. Especially if I'm inking it myself, there's just no physical way I can do it. The alternative would be bimonthly, and miniseries obviously sell better than a bimonthly book does. And so, what I think I'd prefer to do is put out a new miniseries every nine months, or whatever it takes me to do it, and continue on with this. So it wouldn't be every month you run off and buy a new issue, like you do *Spider-Man*, but I think I could get it to where people would be looking forward to the next storyline, just to find out where it's going to go from there.

CBM: Anything else on your plate creatively, be it in the near or far future?

Starlin: No. This is where I want to be right now. I want to work independently. I don't want to have to talk to an editor at Marvel, or DC, and get their approval on every little detail.

The way I look at it is, I was out of the business for a while. I came back, I paid my dues, got everybody so they know who Jim Starlin is again, with the *Thanos* and *End of the Marvel Universe* series. Now, I'm going to cash in on that and do something I really want to do, and *The Cosmic Guard* is it.

Kid Kosmos is not Thanos. He's a twelve-year-old boy who turns into a seventeen-year-old super-hero. He's completely confused. He's got more on his plate than he can handle, and I'm trying to write him as darkly and as funnily as I can.

CBM: What do you get from doing this work, be it personal or professional?

Starlin: Well, some years back I managed to sell some novels, and they did quite well, so financially I'm in fairly good shape, where I can decide I can walk away from Marvel and DC and I can basically sort of retire now—if I wanted to. But I don't want to. I'm not that old of a guy! [General laughter]

But, as far as what I'm getting out of this? I love telling stories. I love the comic book medium. There's instant gratification at the end of the day, when you finish a page and you look at it and you go, "Wow, I did this today!" Hey, that's better than sitting around an insurance office. [More general laughter] When the whole package comes out, most of the time it's a very good experience, seeing that you got the story out that you wanted—or at least most of it out as you wanted. It's never 100%; even if you're doing it by yourself, your own limitations keep you from a few things that you'd like to do.

But, you know, all in all, its reward is mostly self-satisfaction, more than anything else. Yes, I am staying alive doing this stuff, but I guess you could call it "the ego satisfaction" of doing this is 99% of what it is all about.

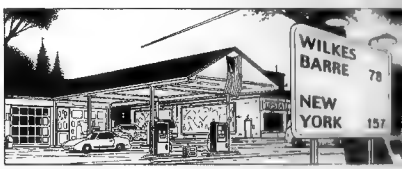
CBM: What do you hope that your fans, be they long-standing or newer ones won by your recent work on *Thanos* or the adventures of Kid Kosmos in *The Cosmic Guard* get out of your work?

Starlin: Well, they're different things entirely.

I mean, I'm glad that I've gotten a good response off the work for Marvel on *Thanos*, *Captain Marvel* and Warlock—as well as past work on *Dreadstar* and other things like that. It's kind of nice to see that *Dreadstar* is coming back in a collected version now. That will be out sometime in March 2004, I believe. *The Cosmic Guard* is going to be a whole different trip.

I'm trying to do more of a head trip with this than I did with the other things. Basically, I'm exploring the teenage years and the insecurity. The X-Men were always good at examining teenage alienation, but I'm trying to get something that's a little bit different this time around in the fact that it's alienation with a darker edge to it. The things that Ray Torres runs into, you just wouldn't have been able to get through up at Marvel. It's more of an adult comic about a kid than it is any kind of kid comic book. I have to give that warning, if nothing else. I mean, he's a typical teenager crashing through puberty.

Your typical real life teenager doesn't behave in such a way that you can, most of the time, get them on TV—let alone in a comic book!



Paul Gulacy Index

1973 TO THE PRESENT

Comics
(complete issues)

Adventure into Fear (starring Morbius the Living Vampire) #20 (Paul's first published color comic story- P) Marvel Comics 1973
Master of Kung Fu #18, 19, 20, 22, 25, 29-31, 32-35, 38-40, 42-50 & 53 (reprint MOKF #20) (P in all, Inks in #29 & 40) Marvel Comics 1974-77
Giant-size Master of Kung Fu #1-3 (P in all) Marvel Comics 1974-75
Sabre #1 & 2 (P, I & C in both- color reprint of Sabre GN) (First issue included a new painted cover) Eclipse Comics 1982
Six from Sirius #1-4 (P, I & C in all) (Issue #1 contains a 1 page profile of Gulacy & index of his work for Marvel through 1984) (Issue #4 contains 4 pages of discussion between Gulacy & Moench re: "The Making of Six from Sirius" & 4 preliminary drawings- P) Epic/Marvel Comics 1984
Nightmares #1 & 2 (P, I & C in both- color reprints of stories from Eerie Magazine #103-105 & 109-111) Eclipse Comics 1985
Six from Sirius 2 #1-4 (P, I & C in all) Epic/Marvel Comics 1986
Batman #393 & 394 (P, I & C in both) DC Comics 1986
Valkyrie mini-series #1-3 (P & C in all) Eclipse Comics 1987
Slash Maraud #1-6 (P, I & C in all) DC Comics 1987-88
Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight (Prey) #11-15 (P & C in all) DC Comics 1990-91 (See additional Batman LODK entries below)
Terminator: Secondary Objectives #1-4 (P & C in all) Dark Horse Comics 1991

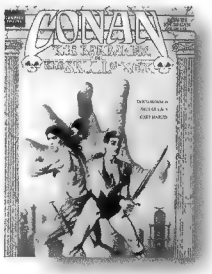
James Bond: Serpent's Tooth #1-3 (P, I & painted C in all) Dark Horse Comics/Acme Comics Ltd. 1992-93
Comics Greatest World: Barb Wire (Week 1) (P) Dark Horse Comics 1993
Thing from Another World: Eternal Vows #1-4 (P & C in all) Dark Horse Comics 1993-94
Batman vs. Predator II #1-4 (P & C in all) DC Comics/Dark Horse Comics 1994-95
Eternal Warrior #36 (P & C) Valiant/ Acclaim Comics 1995
Bloodshot #41 (P) Valiant/Acclaim Comics 1995
Turok Dinosaur Hunter #31-33 & 39-40 (P & C in all) Valiant/Acclaim Comics 1995-96
X-O Manowar #64 (P) Valiant/Acclaim Comics 1996
Killer Instinct Preview (Nintendo Power Exclusive Edition) #1 (Cover-P & I and a 13 page story-P) (smaller size format- 5" x 8") Acclaim Comics 1996
The Grackle #1-4 (P & C in all, I in #1 only) (Issue #4 contains 1 page Gulacy interview) Acclaim Comics 1997
Turok/Timewalker #1 & 2 (P & C in both) Acclaim Comics 1997
Star Wars: Crimson Empire #1-6 (P in all) Dark Horse Comics 1997-98
Star Wars: Crimson Empire II #1-6 (P in all) Dark Horse Comics 1998-99
Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #122 (P) Part 1 of 2 DC Comics 1999
Batman: Shadow of the Bat #90 (P) Part 2 of 2 DC Comics 1999
Batman: Outlaws #1-3 (P & C in all) DC Comics 2000
Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight (Terror) #137-141 (P & C in all) DC Comics 2000-01
Green Lantern: Dragon Lord #1-3 (P & C in all) DC Comics 2001
S.C.I. Spy #1-6 (P & C in all) Vertigo/DC Comics 2002
Shang-Chi Master of Kung Fu #1-6 (P & C in all) Max/Marvel Comics 2002-03
Reload #1-3 (P & C in all) Wildstorm/DC Comics 2003
Catwoman #25-30 (P & C in all) DC Comics 2003-04

Cover Art • Comics
(P & I on all, unless noted differently)
Spectacular Spiderman #8 Marvel Comics 1977
Logan's Run #6 Marvel Comics 1977

Symbol Key: C = Cover art P = Pencils I = Inks

Marvel Classic Comics #26 The Iliad (inside back cover) Marvel Comics 1977
Master of Kung Fu #51, 55, 64 & 67 Marvel Comics 1977-78
Rawhide Kid #147 Marvel Comics 1978
Black Diamond #2-5 (Issue #5 also included a 1 page preview cover for the unpublished Black Diamond graphic novelette-P & I) Americomics 1983-84
Starmasters #1 Americomics 1984
Nightveil #1 Americomics 1984
Colt Special #1 (Also featuring Black Diamond) Americomics 1985
Miracleman #5 & 7 Eclipse Comics 1986
Crossfire and Rainbow #2 Eclipse Comics 1986
New Wave #5 Eclipse Comics 1986
3-D Three Stooges #1 & 2 Eclipse Comics 1986
Whodunnit? #2 Eclipse Comics 1986
Airboy #7 & 20 Eclipse Comics 1986-87
Boris the Bear #12 (James Bond Thunderball spoof back cover) Dark Horse Comics 1987
Get Lost #1 New Comics Group 1987
Dark Horse Presents #5 & 9 Dark Horse Comics 1987
Boris the Bear #19 (Inks only) Nicotat Comics 1988
Action Comics #612 (Featuring the new Secret Six) DC Comics 1988
Miracleman Family #2 Eclipse Comics 1988
Phaze #2 Eclipse Comics 1988
Terminator #10 (Painted cover) Now Comics 1989
Cat & Mouse #1 Aircel Comics 1990
A.R.M. #3 Adventure Comics 1990
Classic Girls #1 Eternity Comics 1990
Bodyguard #1-3 Aircel Comics 1990
Logan's Run #1 Adventure Comics 1990
Southern Squadron #4 Aircel Comics 1990
Marvel Comics Presents #51 (Wolverine) Marvel Comics 1990
Planet of the Apes #12 Adventure Comics 1991
Real War Stories #2 (Painted cover) Eclipse Comics 1991
Ape Nation #2 Adventure Comics 1991
Scimidar Book 2 #2 Eternity Comics 1989
Southern Squadron: Freedom of Information Act #4 Aircel Comics 1992
Danger Trail #1-4 DC Comics 1993
Showcase '93 #10 (Featuring Huntress, Deathstroke & Katana) DC Comics 1993
Zorro #7 Topps Comics 1994
Eternal Warrior Yearbook #2 Valiant Comics 1994
Eternal Warrior #33, 34, 35, 39 & 40 Valiant Comics 1995
Hawkeye #2 Marvel Comics 2003

Graphic Novels
Sabre (wraparound cover, P & I- except Craig Russell inks on pgs. 25, 29, 31, 32 & 37) 38 pages Eclipse Enterprises 1978
Sabre: 10th Anniversary Edition (New painted cover) HC & SC editions Eclipse Enterprises 1988
Sabre: 20th Anniversary Edition (Original cover reprint with variant color) Image Comics 1998
Conan: The Skull of Set (Painted Cover, P & I) 60 pages Marvel Comics 1988
Dinosaurs for Hire GN: Guns N' Lizards (P & I) Malibu Graphics 1989
Agent 13: Acolytes of Darkness GN (Painted cover) TSR Inc. 1990



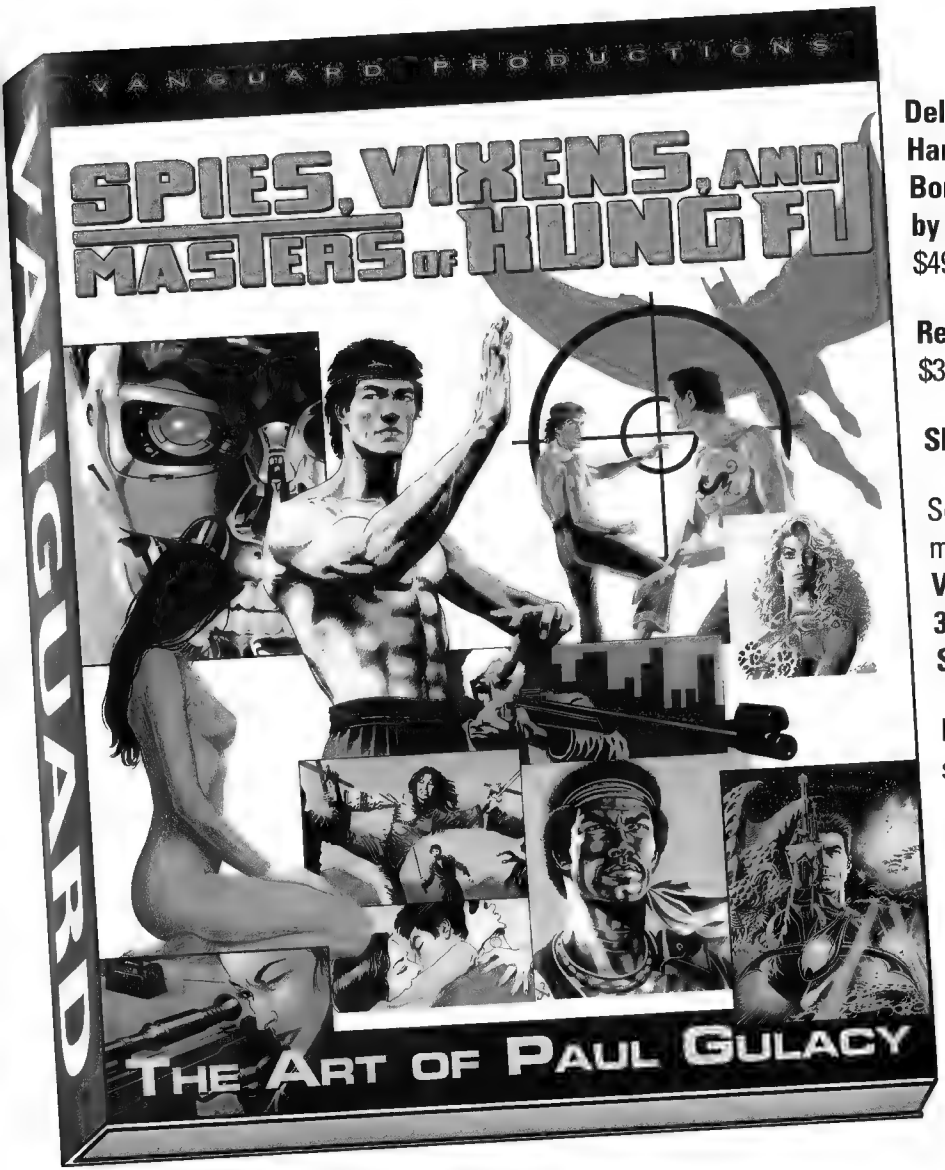
—Compiled by Dave Lemieux

VANGUARD™

The Finest in Illustration & Cartooning Presents

SPIES, VIXENS AND MASTERS OF KUNG FU:

THE ART OF PAUL GULACY



Deluxe, Slipcased Hardcover with 16-pg Bonus Portfolio Signed by Paul Gulacy
$49.95 + $6 s/h

Regular Hardcover
$34.95 - $5 s/h

Shipping March 2005

Send check or money order to:
Vanguard Productions
390 Campus Drive
Somerset, NJ 08873

Foreign orders double shipping.

Foreign checks must be payable through a USA bank.

creativemix.com/vanguard

by Mike Wilbur

Bring on the Bad Guys, Part 2

The hardest part of documenting the plethora of comic character statues of post-Golden Age villains is keeping track of their exponentially-increasing numbers and not overlooking anyone.

Practicality and space limitations demand tough decisions in restricting the size of the Big Tent. Unlike our previous installment a couple of issues ago, where we needed to cast a wide, inclusive net for our subjects, this time, tight, exclusionary boundaries must be employed. Consequently, we'll be foregoing many fringe characters who would be better served at a later date in other categories.

With a handful of exceptions, most villain pieces have been produced in moderately priced busts and smaller-scale statues. The easiest thing to do will be to list, by producer, all of the villainous releases currently on the market.

From **Bowen Designs**, we've gotten mini-busts of the Mole Man, Red Skull, Magneto, Apocalypse, Thanos, Sabretooth, Green Goblin, Dr. Octopus, Rhino, Juggernaut, Galactus, Kraven the Hunter, Venom, Mysterio, Baron Zemo, Bullseye, Loki, and Mr. Sinister, with Fin Fang Foom and Doctor Doom waiting in the wings. Bowen has also produced full-size statues of Doctor Doom, Green Goblin, and Dark Phoenix, along with reduced-scale mini-statues of Doctor Doom and Dark Phoenix.

DC has released less of its stable of available villains in statue form than any of the other comics publishers. **DC Direct**'s axis of evil to date counts only the Joker (in statue, mini-statue, mini-bust and marionette form), Harley Quinn (medium statue, mini-statue, animation maquette and marionette), Darkseid (full-size statue), Sinestro (mini-bust/ring prop), Poison Ivy (animated-style medium statue), Catwoman (two full-size statues, animated-style medium statue), and Mr. Mxyzptlk (full-size statue) among its members.

Diamond Select produces a line of busts in a series called **Rogues Gallery**. Releases to date include the Lizard, Sandman, Carnage, Kingpin, Kraven the Hunter, Vulture, Scorpion, Venom, Sunfire, Mandarin, Green Goblin and Electro. DST's **Marvel Universe** series of busts features Doctor Doom, Hobgoblin, Shocker, and Mephisto. Magneto, Green Goblin and Doctor Octopus are the featured villains in DST's **Ultimate Marvel** line of busts. Releases in DST's **Avengers and**

Adversaries line of medium-size statues include the Mandarin, the Red Skull, Loki and Ultron. The Silver Age line of medium statues features Magneto as its only villain thus far. Thanos appears in the full-size line of **Marvel Milestones**

statues.

Dynamic Forces' impressive series of life-size character busts, designed by artist **Alex Ross,** includes an eerily-lifelike Green Goblin, with a rendition of Doctor Doom coming soon. The villains represented in DFE's line of busts include the Abomination, the Leader, Rhino, Loki, Green Goblin and the Super Skrull. The **Earth X** busts designed by

Alex Ross include Venom and Belasco.

Factory X produced licensed reproductions of the Green Goblin (as he appeared in the 2002 *Spider-Man* movie) in both statue and mini-bust form.

Palisades has issued a number of villains in its line of mini-busts based on characters from the **G.I.Joe** comics originated by Marvel in the '80s, and revived in the late '90s by Dreamwave. Characters so far include Storm Shadow, the Baroness, Destro, Cobra Commander and Firefly.

I'll leave the rest of my space this time to cram in a random sampling of villainous pictures. This year's convention season is rapidly approaching, so it's time to get those want-lists ready!

by Michael Naiman

I Get Mail!

Russ' thoughts of changing *CBM* sure has generated a bunch of mail as of late. I haven't seen this much fan response and opinion since Gary and Lisa Carter decided to go to Tennessee and work for Overstreet!

Fair and Balanced (sorry FOX) has always been the mantra for *CBM*. A little of this and a little of that. While all collectors pay lip service to the notion that *"they're in it for the love of the hobby"* the underpinnings of a good investment for future profits is always there—no matter what anyone says.

Thanks to West Stephan for writing in last issue! His point about not caring much for prices realized on *Lone Ranger* #75 VF- misses the point somewhat. We know a few issues in advance what the topics of coverage will be. When the Western issue appeared, I tried to get a bunch of comps on that under-collected genre so that I could keep with the theme of the issue. However, I understand that everyone wants to know how much the most collected and fan favorite issues have sold for. Please see this edition of "MarketWatch."

West also brought up the subject of reporting CGC sales. I have deliberately *not* reported on these examples for a reason. The vast majority of collectors cannot afford these high priced slabbed books. My observations are that the high grade over-*Guide* NM comics are affordable by 5-10% of the collecting community. Sure it's nice to see how your copies of mint books might fare if you slabbed them. But the majority of collectors, readers and hobbyists are out there everyday looking for affordable copies to fill their runs. That's what I report. That's the marketplace for the Vast Majority.

It was opined in *CBM* that "*there is no possible way for a printed monthly to keep up with day-to-day fluctuations,*" yet how can one then turn around and promote a sister publication and say they are providing *"a service for collectors"*? I'm also providing a service! A daily update on your stock portfolio, er, comics is just *not* possible. Trends develop over a length of time—and they *can* be reported in the print media.

The retail dealers, convention dealers and on-line sellers are in the trenches everyday. I can't help it if they report they are getting under *Guide* for the vast majority of non-NM books. You'll note that of the 150+ "MarketWatch" comics that appear every month there are maybe 10% above *Guide*, 2% at *Guide* and 88% that are sold at *below Guide*. That's the Real Everyday Marketplace.

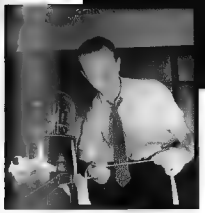
CBM is "*in the purest sense a professional fanzine,*" says John Stuart in his letter that appeared in *CBM* #110. In recent years, it has slid away from that meeting place for fans. John's suggestion of printing up a Holy Grail column is a great idea. I'd also like to see articles about fans and what they collect. There's plenty of bio material available from the Diamond *Dialogue*. John also wanted to see info on original art sales. That's a tough group of collectors. They don't blab much about what they've paid—but they'll surely tell you what they own! I have noticed that those who collect original comic art can be very secretive and highly private about what is paid and to whom. I too, would like to extract more information. I will make a more concerted effort to pry into that Secret World and report more on that topic in the near future.

CBM doesn't have to be a pure and dry history book. I am against changing the brand name that has taken so many years to build up. The further diluting of the magazine's focus is a slippery slope that must be fully explored before making a final decision.

How many times have you looked online for comics and seen the sales blurb "File Copy" only to find out that the comic is just a high grade issue? I am real tired of that misrepresentation! According to the First Edition of the *Overstreet Comic Book Grading Guide*, a File Copy is a "*High Grade comic originating from* ***THE PUBLISHERS FILE*** [my emphasis]. *Not all file copies are in pristine mint condition.*" Get it? The Publisher's files. *Not* the newsstand, not harvested from the distributors delivery box. It is a major disservice to the collecting community to misrepresent their production in this manner. Please Cease and Desist!

The Odd, the Rare and the Disney. Once again that lucky issue of *Uncle Scrooge* #179 has changed hands in a couple of noteworthy sales. A CGC 9.0 (VF/NM) issue sold for $645 (1.59X *Guide*) and a VF issue sold for $450 (1.58X *Guide*). As last reported a couple of months ago a ***Little Lulu* #260** in NM 9.2 sold for $1,526 (10X *Guide*); another issue CGC'd at 3.0 (GD/VG) recently sold for $690—a record-breaking multiple of **38.33X *Guide***! Long time collectors Scott McAdam and Rick Holley have been hunting high and low for the illusive ultra rare ***Super Goof* #61**. Well, my friends, one finally surfaced. Although graded FAIR (50% of Good in value?), it was described as having minor wear on the cover, age discoloration, split on spine, writing on front cover and first page as well as a spine roll. According to the most recent *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* one would conservatively value this at—$1. **This copy sold for, GULP!, $399!** *Oh My!* You can do the math multiple on this one!

Makes a collector wonder what the heck is going on with these oddball



CBM Market Watch

A report of market indicator sales (including % of Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide) by Michael Naiman

Action

#53	VG	$177	82%
#54	VF	$313	46%
#93	VG	$91	65%
#204	VG	$64	80%
#224	GD	$13	35%
#234	GD	$21	56%
#243	FN	$48	52%
#252	VG+	$255	92%
#254	VG	$32	40%
#267	VG	$77	80%
#269	VF	$68	64%
#270	FN	$55	96%
#275	VF/NM	$171	1.51X
#277	VF	$70	81%
#279	VF	$49	57%
#283	VF	$64	76%

All-Flash

#12	VF	$480	84%
#24	VF	$360	94%
#25	VF	$310	81%

All Star

#5	VG	$460	52%
#27	VG	$325	1.19X
#41	VG	$141	61%
#45	GD-	$98	85%

Amazing Spider-Man

#5	VG+	$355	1.16X
#6	VF(R)	$200	17%
#6	FN	$169	40%
#7	NM(R)	$285	19%
#7	GD+	$102	1.12X
#10	VF/NM(R)	$250	21%
#11	VG	$97	97%
#13	VF(R)	$174	29%
#13	VG	$76	54%
#14	FN	$280	58%
#16	VG	$102	1.09X
#17	VF	$410	79%
#17	VF-	$340	66%
#20	VG	$75	78%
#25	GD+	$24	77%
#25	VG	$38	61%
#30	FN	$81	1.17X
#35	VF+	$101	63%
#40	VG+	$78	1.05X
#50	FN	$71	55%
#50	VG	$66	76%
#60	FN	$36	1.2X
#65	FN	$19	79%
#129	VF/NM	$335	60%

Batman

#7	VG	$600	71%
#11	VG	$765	61%
#15	VG	$370	63%
#25	GD+	$225	1.02X
#37	GD+	$155	1.02X
#41	FN	$135	56%
#42	VG	$370	1.47X
#54	VG	$90	58%
#62	VG	$250	1.05X
#73	GD	$60	72%
#78	VG	$115	76%
#84	GD	$90	1.21X
#103	VG-	$56	65%
#104	VG	$65	76%
#113	VG	$45	58%
#120	VG	$37	47%
#131	VG+	$33	79%
#146	FN	$50	1.38X
#153	VF	$78	1.14X
#155	FN	$75	80%
#165	VF	$48	70%
#171	VG	$53	72%

Blonde Phantom

#14	VG	$225	1.29X
#21	FN	$275	1.20X

Captain America

#14	VG+	$819	1.16X
#15	VG	$900	1.29X
#44	GD	$100	59%
#51	GD	$130	Guide
#100	VF-	$170	60%

Detective

#32	GD	$785	1.32X
#34	VG	$785	86%
#95	FN	$145	64%
#107	VF	$185	40%
#169	GD	$20	36%
#265	GD	$28	72%
#273	FN	$21	32%
#288	FN	$25	50%
#298	VG	$40	80%
#326	VF	$40	70%
#327	VF	$25	30%

Flash (SA)

#175	NM	$98	44%

Human Torch

#4(#3)	FN	$912	73%
#11	GD+	$200	1.18X
#30	FN	$300	93%

Lois Lane

#1	GD	$225	80%
#2	VG	$135	92%

Marvel Mystery

#16	VG	$532	1.07X
#92	VG(R)	$635	1.07X

Marvel Tales

#97	VG	$68	45%
#99	VG-	$53	42%

More Fun

#106	VG	$96	60%

Sensation

#14	VG	$150	78%
#48	VG	$50	57%
#51	FN	$68	55%
#57	GD	$35	85%
#80	GD	$41	Guide
#86	GD	$58	1.65X

Sub-Mariner

#9	VG	$203	45%
#10	GD	$315	1.39X

Superboy

#2	GD	$130	66%
#5	VG	$235	1.15X
#6	VG	$160	90%

Superman

#19	VG	$190	56%
#30	GD	$170	74%
#36	GD	$125	1.25X
#45	VF	$310	62%
#59	VF	$325	80%
#62	FN	$200	1.06X
#102	VG	$91	1.14X
#105	VG	$100	1.25X
#152	FN	$24	80%
#155	FN	$17	57%
#159	VG	$21	1.16X
#161	VG	$22	1.1X
#163	FN	$15	71%
#167	FN	$24	80%
#169	FN	$15	71%
#171	FN	$24	1.14X
#174	FN	$16	76%
#179	VF-	$11	20%
#180	FN	$16	76%
#188	VF	$12	27%
#199	VF-	$76	43%

Wonder Woman

#1	GD	"$1500"	75%
#16	GD	$105	1.03X
#18	FN	$233	76%
#19	VF-	$310	49%
#23	FN	$155	61%
#27	VF-	$430	81%
#33	GD	$53	88%
#40	GD	$72	1.2X
#45	GD	$80	88%
#59	VG	$57	73%
#90	GD	$52	1.73X

World's Finest

#176	VF/NM	$33	82%

X-Men

#1	FN	"$1875"	1.08X
#2	FN	$300	66%
#3	VG+	$145	1.25X
#4	VF-	$210	41%
#5	VG+	$110	1.28X
#7	FN+	$94	98%
#7	VG	$49	77%
#9	FN+	$66	69%
#10	FN	$61	61%
#11	FN	$50	57%
#12	VF-	$86	33%
#12	FN+	$86	82%
#12	VG+	$76	1.08X
#13	FN	$47	54%
#13	FN-	$31	36%
#14	FN	$65	70%
#15	FN+	$59	68%
#16	VF	$64	55%
#16	VF	$58	50%
#17	NM	$260	1.23X
#18	VF	$52	44%
#22	NM(R)	$77	48%
#32	VF-	$50	74%
#94	VG+	$124	1.07X

Whitman issues? According to the World's Foremost Whitman Completist, Andrew Rathburn, the Rarest Whitman issues (in descending order) are:

1) *Porky Pig* #99 (***RAREST of Them All!***); 2) *Winnie the Pooh* #22; 3) *Looney Tunes* #34; 4) *Looney Tunes* #35; 5) *Tom and Jerry* #332; 6) *Super Goof* #61; 7) *Pink Panther* #76; 8) *Pink Panther* #77; 9) *Chip and Dale* #69; 10) *Little Lulu* #260; 11) *Daffy Duck* #130; 12) *Daffy Duck* #131; 13) *Tweety and Sylvester* #107; 14) *Yosemite Sam* #70; 15) *Popeye* #158; 16) *Woody Woodpecker* #190; 17) *Porky Pig* #98; 18) *Chip and Dale* #68; 19) *Tweety and Sylvester* #106; 20) *Yosemite Sam* #69; 21) *Bugs Bunny* #221; 22) *WDCS* #480; 23) *Battle of the Planets* #7; 24) *Mickey Mouse* #208; 25) *Donald Duck* #222; 26) *Uncle Scrooge* #179. (*Overstreet* says *Buck Rogers* #10 does not exist, so not on the list.)

Show report: The Wizard-Con Long Beach. It was professional. Not the same rules you have at the San Diego show. Boxes are allowed on the floors and exhibitors can sit in the aisles to clear a little room out of their booths. I was

[continued on page 76]

Sincere Comics
4667 Airport Blvd.
Mobile, AL 36608
Sincerecmx@aol.com
888-533-6008
eBay ID: Sincerecmx

It does seem that eBay is the stock market for comic book prices, whether it's low or high grade books. At this point, I'm mainly trading in penny-stocks (cheap comics). As prices in the *Guide* seem to go up, the real prices on a day-to-day basis seem to be going down drastically. Anybody with a scanner or a camera and an eBay account has instantly become a dealer. Unfortunately, my rule of thumb holds true: 92% of the people I run into couldn't grade a comic book if their life depended on it. So, it seems the people are either buying from the tried-and-true eBayers with a good reputation and a high feedback, or they're gravitating toward CGC books.

Anybody who seems to have common sense and an eye for a decent book can buy reasonably cheaply-priced books on eBay, have them graded by CGC, and put them back on eBay which, for other than key issues, seems to be a crap-shoot. As it has been in the last couple of years, it's getting to be next to impossible to find comic books from the early '70s and below with any straight runs or keys in it. If you're lucky enough to find a collection that has not been cherry-picked, the books are usually overstated in quality, and the asking price is more than you can get on eBay. I have on numerous recent occasions had people bring me collections with '60s and '70s material in it and I showed them what the real selling price was on eBay—they were stunned to say the least. Needless to say, I kept my money in my pocket, and they walked out with their books.

As usual, I've been doing my "one-legged man in a butt-kicking contest" routine. We've been trying to manage somewhere between 150-200 auctions a week on eBay—that's a lot of butt-kicking with only one leg! Everything seems to sell as long as it's priced cheap, cheap, cheap. Archies seem to go for 30-40 cents a piece in lots of 25-35, and the same with the Archie Digests. However, some Archies from the '50s and early '60s can bring in $6-7 dollars as a single issue.

Most Marvels and DCs in decent shape from the '60s to 1970 seem to be going for at least $9 a pop, as long as they're in VG to FN condition. Case-in-point: most X-Men from the '60s to the early '80s seem to go for about $10 each. To say there is a glut of those issues on eBay would be putting it very bluntly. Even with all this negative stuff, the positive side is that you can get rid of anything you want on eBay. The stranger and more obscure the title seems to be, the higher percentage of sell-through ratio you're going to have.

The simple fact is nobody seems to put them up. If you're looking for that hard-to-find book to fill a hole in your collection, you just have to wait for it to be put up on eBay. Ebay is truly a global community; I sell 10-15% of our auctions outside of the United States. One of my best eBay customers resides in Hungary! It looks like a lot of the things I've been saying over the last year are starting to come true. First off, I've stopped going to shows all together, except as a buyer, with one exception being Heroes Con. Otherwise I'm hoping to make appearances in San Diego and Chicago to do some buying. Last year's budget for the show was $10,000 for buying. I came back with over $6000 and some change in my pocket.

Here's what is **selling**:

In-store: *Amazing Spider-Man* #129 5.5 $150; *Detective Comics* #346 6.0 $40; *Giant-Size X-Men* #1 7.5 $300; *Incredible Hulk* #105 $45, #106 $45, #115 $25, #116 $30 (all graded 7.5-8.0); *Iron Man* #55 9.2 $100; *Peter Parker* #1 9.6 $60; *Spawn* #1 9.8 $20; *Superman/Batman* #1 9.8 $15; *X-Men* #113 $50, #114 $30, #116 $50, #123 $30, #125 $30 (all graded 9.0 or 9.2).

E-bay: *Doctor Strange* #107-182, all in about 7.5, $9.99 each; *Fantastic Four* #6 2.5 $156, #7 4.5 $45, #8 4.5 $45, #10 5.0 $85, #26 4.5 $26, #49 6.0 $45, #67 6.0 $27; *Giant-Size X-Men* #1 5.5 $165, #1 5.0 $154; *Incredible Hulk* #3 7.0 $410, #6 with a 6.5 cover but without the coupons (that did not interfere with the story) became a 1.5 $65; *Iron Fist* #14 5.5 $46; *Iron Man* #55 5.0 $35; *Superboy* #45 4.0 $46; *X-Men* #10 7.5 $85, #94 7.5 $177.

Terry O'Neill

Terry's Comics DBA Nationwide Comics
PO Box 2065
Orange, CA 92859
714-288-2993 FAX: 714-288-8992
West coast: info@terryscomics.com
East coast:
Davesamerican@earthlink.net
www.terryscomics.com

The Long Beach (Wizard World West) Convention was about the size of Wonder-Con in size and atmosphere. The attendance seemed to be very good for a first time show and my sales were better than any convention I ever did at Wonder-Con. The city of Long Beach has improved the downtown area so much that it is now starting to look like a mini-gas lamp district. Overall I would say that this show far exceeded any expectations I had. They already plan to move the show to a larger hall next year. I hope the show continues to do well and grow. The only problem I had with the show was that it occurs in the middle of my catalog mailings. This causes my ability to keep good track of my inventory to be slightly reduced. Some sales of note were as

follows:

Golden Age: *All Select* #6 3.0 $250; *Cyclone Comics* #4 8.0 $240; *Detective Comics* #42 Sos ł.5 $250; *Marvel Mystery Comics* #4 Mr ct 3.0 $1200, #14 Ws, PcFc, 1.8 $300; *Mystery Men Comics* #1 1.0 nbc $450, #2 c/o, PcBc 1.0 $250; *Silver Streak* V1 #6 Sos, Si7 1.8 $1300; *Whiz Comics* #44 Ws, Rs 3.0 $60.

Atomic Age: *Adventure Comics* #290 Dis 6.0 $36; *Challengers of the Unknown* #6 5.5 $100; *Picture Stories From the Bible* NT #1 5.0 $30; *Space Adventures* #42 Ditko 6.0 $40; *Terrors of the Jungle* #4 T 3.0 $42.

Silver Age: *Amazing Spider-Man* #97 6.5 $45, #138 9.4 $60; *Batman* #155 9.2 $300; *Daredevil* #16 9.0 $85; *Metal Men* #29 Ds 9.0 $42; *Tales of Suspense* #41 CGC 8.5 $700, #43 CGC 8.5 $300; *X-Men* #29 8.5 $75, #105 7.5 $25.

Magazines, etc.: *DC & Marvel Present: Superman & Spider-Man* nn 9.4 $60; *Heritage* #1A & #1B Williamson 9.4 $75; *Miracleman* #15 scarce 9.4 $75; *Peter Pan* No.3000 "1930s" 6.5 $20; *Savage Tales* #1 8.0 $80.

Robert Letscher II

Key Comics
PO Box 5035
Mesa, AZ 85211
Phone: 480-890-0055
eBay ID: keycomics
KeyComics@hotmail.com

Hello from sweltering Arizona, the only place in America where we already hit 97 degrees today, and it's just mid-March! The back-issue comics (and comic art) continue to be very popular, with good demand for a wide array of genres, ages and formats. I know most of you *CBM* readers aren't too interested in the "commons" from the past couple decades, so I'll focus on the older stuff! Here are some of the **unslabbed comic books** we've sold lately:

Adventures Into The Unknown #30 VG+ $50; *Amazing Adventures* #3 (1951) VG $51; *Baffling Mysteries* #18 VG+ $33, #21 VG $33; *Crime Mysteries* #15 GD $50; *Eerie* #2 (1st Mag. format) VG $20; *Forbidden Worlds* #23 VG $40; *House of Secrets* #100 VF $30; *Kerry Drake* #10 FN/VF $68; *Mysteries Weird & Strange* #3 VG $39; *Power Comics* #1 (1977) VF $20; *Racket Squad* #1 VG+ $50; *Rawhide* (FC #1097) FN- $45; *Rima* #1 NM $15; *Space Action* #3 VG $41.

A couple noteworthy recent Modern Age comic sales include a run of Valiant's *Harbinger* #1 through #5 for $55, and a full set of Marvel *Super-Heroes Secret Wars* #1-12 for $40.

The CGC-graded books are always easy to sell, with a couple noteworthy unrestored Golden Age gems sold lately: *Famous Funnies* #212 (Frazetta Buck Rogers classic) CGC 7.0 $457; *Strange Mysteries* #1 (Superior/Scarce pre-Code horror) CGC 9.0 $970.

We've sold and traded quite a bit of original comic book **line art** recently. Here are a few samples of cash sales: *Billy the Kid* (random mediocre page from Toby Press mid-'50s late number) $100; *Creepy* #42 Dave Cockrum pencils, two horror pages sold at $240 apiece; *Detective* #424 Dick Giordano Batman page $160; *G. I. Combat* #274 action page/inked/1970s $50; *Little Brother Hugo* daily strips (assorted/1950s) $40 apiece; *Rawhide Kid* #67 (Larry Lieber page/Two-Gun Kid) $125; *Sad Sack and Sarge* #96 one-page story $35; *Tell It to the Marines* 1950s complete two-page story $335. Other non-Adler production art sold includes: *Blondie* #163 Hand-Colored Cover $100; *X-Men* #108 Hand-Colored Cover $167.

The **Jack Adler Collection** remains hot, with an amazing amount of interest in trades—we've been trading it easily to other dealers for old comic books and comic and strip line art, which we can always use! Rather than use up all the space reporting the many Adler pieces we traded off, I'll focus on just some of the actual cash sales:

Action #428 Hand-Colored Cover $225; *Adventure* #410 Hand-Colored Cover $180; *All Star Western* #1 Approval Cover $160; *Batman* #261 Cover Acetate Four-Color Separation $210; *Brave and the Bold* #101 Hand-Colored Cover $200; *Challengers of the Unknown* #80 Hand-Colored Cover $170; *G. I. Combat* #150 Hand-Colored Cover $160; *House of Mystery* #189 Approval Cover/Signed by Neal Adams $190, #217 Approval Cover/Signed by Wrightson $17, #221 Approval Cover/Signed by Wrightson $175; *House Of Secrets* #86 Approval Cover/Signed by Adams $175, #100 Approval Cover/Signed by Wrightson $200; *Our Army At War* #172 Approval Cover $140; *Rima* #6 Cover Acetate Four-Color Separation $150; *Star Spangled War Stories* #183 Hand-Colored Cover $150; *Showcase Comics* #77 Approval Cover $120; *Supergirl* #1 Approval Cover $225; *Superman* #264 Cover Acetate Four-Color Separation $200; *The Unexpected* #115 Approval Cover/Signed by Neal Adams $175; *Weird Mystery Tales* #4 Approval Cover $115.

I encourage fans, speculators and "serious investors" alike to always keep some of what they actually like and enjoy in their "portfolio," and you'll always be one step ahead as you can actually admire and enjoy your investment, something those stock-and-bond-only guys cannot experience! (And with any luck, your vintage comic or art collection will perform acceptably as an investment, to boot!) It is an exciting time to be in the hobby, with lots of great material hitting the market on a regular basis, and plenty of ravenous fans to gobble it up!

Thanks for listening, and happy collecting!

Doug Sulipa's Comic World

Box 21986
Steinbach MB R5G 1B5 Canada
204-346-3674 FAX: 204-346-1632
cworld@mts.net
www.dougcomicworld.com

As is usual this time of year, we are getting a last minute flurry of orders, before the release of the new *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide*. For the first time in a while, Silver Age DCs have outsold SA Marvels for the last three to four months straight. The strong characters like Superman and Batman related titles led the way. Demand is very

high for all of the "Big 5" DC War titles, right from 1950 thru mid-1970s and beyond. Most customers have preferred the VG mid-grade range copies. The more affordable FA and GD copies also sold quite well. We had some resistance on FN/VF and better copies, especially once over $100 in price. *Fox and Crow*, along with *Real Screen*, plus *TV Screen*, have had a large increase in demand. In just a matter of weeks we sold almost our entire stock, in all grades. There are suddenly a lot of DC love comics completists, especially for 1960s issues. Most of these sell in any grade. All 1968-1980 DC horror titles are actually *hot*, with 1968-1974 selling in all grades. VF or better copies are the most requested and getting very difficult to re-stock.

Bronze Age Marvels are currently far outselling their Silver Age counterparts. Any and all Key issue Marvels, from 1970-1974, especially in VF or better, are now selling two to three times faster then we can restock them. *Marvel Spotlight* #5 and *Spider-Man* #129 are on almost all Marvel want lists. This is causing even over-graded raw copies to sell for multiples of *Guide* on eBay.

Classics Illustrated has been a slow but sure and steady seller for over 30 years for me. In the last six months I have noted a sharp increase in demand for the older issues. Most requested are the $6-$30 price range line-drawn cover issues. Demand for originals is up. "First new art" and "first new cover" issues are top sellers. Many fans seem to want to have one example each of all the cover variants and all the interior art variants. Those with many printings of the same cover or art remain slow. Those with only one to two printings of certain cover or art variations are getting to be in shorter and shorter supply. This may result in future price increases on those issues. *Classics Juniors* have also been selling over twice as fast as normal. It seems that about 20 of the 77 issues are common, especially due to the plentiful HRN #576 printings. About another 24 issues are uncommon. There are about 33 issues that had fewer printings and/or no HRN #576 printings, thus are in very short supply. These issues are scarce to rare on the current market, and low grade copies can bring 200-300% *Guide*. Some of the toughest *Classics Juniors* include; #506, 514, 525-529, 532-534, 537, 540, 542, 543, 547, 553, 555, 556, 558-565, 568, 571-573, 575-577.

Whitman comics of the August through December 1980 period are hot again. Like it or not, the 8-12/1980 Whitman's have proven for over three years on eBay to be among the rarest comics of the last 50 years, and continue to bring record prices, often for unslabbed copies. There are still *no* known copies of *Winnie the Pooh* #22. If a VF/NM copy ever surfaces, I expect it would bring over $1000 on eBay.

Charlton comics have been hot and cold for the last six months. For the last few months, we have had a lot of buyers looking for any and all Charlton horror titles in FN/VF or higher grades. Unlike Marvel and DC, this is not an easy task on even the "common" issues. Collectors and dealers alike had scorned Charlton comics for over 30+ years of comic collecting. Only in the last five to seven years have collectors more and more sought out this odd publisher with more genres than many publishers had titles. Currently the 1968-1980 horror titles are the most requested.

Warren mags continue to be strong sellers. Hmmm—in case you didn't notice there seems to be a Bronze horror theme evolving here. *Eerie*, *Creepy* and *Vampirella* want lists cross my desk several times per week. Surely these buyers are trying to complete their runs. Again and again we see the same 30-40 issues requested in each of these three series. Buyers seem to fill in as many as they can cheaply, then once they get the common issues out of the way they find that the "bargains" dry up fast. These collectors then come to dealers like us to finish their sets. If demand continues, the final remaining "Warren Warehouse" remainders will disappear into collections and the bargain days for Warren mags will be gone. The first few months of CGC-graded magazines have proven that high-grade Warrens are indeed scarce, with sellers often reaping many multiples of *Guide*.

Dell *Four Color* comics continue to be in unusually high demand. Most buyers, as always, want mostly G-FN range copies. *Four Color* westerns in particular are up in demand. TV comics remain steady. Movie comics, usually among the slower Dells, have been selling better than usual. The Key Series from Gold Key in the 1960s are well up in demand, especially in FN or better, especially *Boris Karloff*, *Dr Solar*, *Magnus Robot Fighter*, *Space Family Robinson*, *Tarzan*, *Turok* and *Twilight Zone*. These remain a true bargain when compared to their vintage Marvel and DC counterparts. How many CGC 9.4 issues of these titles do you see, as compared to almost anything Marvel of the same period? Yet these great titles bring a mere 10-35% of the prices. Give 'em a try, they are good reading, a decent investment and fun too. I always loved the painted cover issues.

In a related collectible market, scarce used paperbacks are bringing higher and higher prices. There are about 14 major bookseller sites, with perhaps 6000+ dealers listing over 30,000,000 books. It seems the paperbacks we all collected for the last 50 years (most SF, ERB, Agatha Christie, Louis L'Amour, etc.) are now very common. But all the books we all avoided caused bookstores all over the world to clear them out, or throw them out. This has resulted in 1000s of books, from the 1950s right through to the late 1980s, being in very short supply on the worldwide market. We now sell scarce paperbacks almost daily in the $20-$50+ price range. Many are romance, war, historical fiction, occult, cartoon, humor and general fiction. Many of these books most collectors would not consider buying for 10 cents at a flea market, yet they are an easy sale at $20-$50 in the worldwide market. Oddly, most of these books sell to non-collectors, who do not care about condition and just want to read them. Many SF and mystery that were once scarce are still scarce and getting scarcer. The difference now is we can add reams of unknown and forgotten authors and titles to the list of proven valuable books. Ace #D-15 *Junkie* by William Burroughs

in solid strict FN has risen from about $400 to near $1500 in value. I highly recommend the new and massive *Paperback Prices and Checklist* guide by Graham Holroyd. This is a future and growing market to keep watch over. Take note that high grade paperbacks are much scarcer than comics and the prices are infinitely lower than equivalent rare comics.

Here is an interesting item we just sold: *Cowgirl Fury* (with Two-Gun Kid) by Murray Leinster (Will F. Jenkins), an extremely rare digest format novel by Canadian publisher Bell Features, the publisher of the rare and hot GA Canadian b&w original comics. The only copy I have seen in 35 years of collecting/dealing. The cover in fact looks like comic book art and features a cowgirl swinging a chair in a saloon fight. Of interest is the fact that the character Two-Gun Kid appears here three years *before* the Marvel comics character in 1949. Unknown if other editions exist—probably a true first and only edition. Sold in FN for US $150.

Finally, I want to mention the increase in demand for obscure 1970s and 1980s comics. We have had many collectors dig through the endless lists on our website and dredge up alternate comics, odd undergrounds and forgotten comic magazines of all types. Many that even I did not know we had in stock. A lot of these titles must have had very small print runs. Perhaps they are buying them for sheer scarcity. But I think there is a thrill in owning strange oddball items that almost no other collectors or dealers have ever heard of or seen. If the momentum keeps up, I think these types of items may begin to pick up value too. I certainly have fun looking through them and giving them good new homes with the "new" breed of collector.

Just a few cool titles include: *Arctic Comics* #1 (1986; color comic; polar bears, Eskimos, SF story, etc); *Berford Seaman's Flabby Thighs and Butter* #1 (1976, b&w); *Big Break Comics* (unplanned pregnancy, 1988) #1-3; *Cazco* (Mag, Phil Yeh, Fall/76) #1; *Doctor Peculiar* (Madison Comics, 1984) #1; *Fuddle Duddle* #1-5; *GASM* #1 (Harpoon, International Insanity); *Iznogoud* Graphic Novel series (Rare) with Text by Goscinny; *Le Beaver* (cool Canadian fanzine); *Phantacea* (Mag, 1977) #1-6; *Poor Richard's Adzine*, and assorted "How to Draw" titles. And look to find: *Honkytonk Sue* (Bob Boze, Bell Pub) #3 (1980, 68 page b&w comic, "Sue gets the Beatles to reunite and convert to country & western," about 20-page appearance of the Beatles).

Steven Wyatt

SuperCon
supercon@winfirst.com

The shows have begun and the sales are starting out fine. With the first big show of the year over, sales on Silver Age are going strong. Wizard World was a good show for Silver and Bronze, however, Golden Age was a little slow. Portland Con (bless Richard Finn) has continually been my best one-day show.

High-grade Bronze and Silver are still flying out the door; here are a few examples: *Amazing Adventures* #1 NM $60; *Amazing Spider-Man* #100 F $70, #129 VF $350 and VF- $300; *Astonishing Tales* #1 NM $60. Byrne *X-Men* in high grade are selling at full *Guide* as fast as I can get them in, especially #141 and #142 ("Days of Future Past")—a NM #141 brings $50 and a NM #142 brings $45 every time. I know it's not Bronze and I sell "old books" but I have sold three copies of *Next Men* #21 in NM for $50 each and the sleeper is the *San Diego Comics* #2 with the first Hell Boy appearance going for a whopping $100.

Silver Age is stronger than ever. I travel with over 35 boxes of Silver and Bronze Marvels and DCs and people are still filling lists and reading comics (my favorite customers!). Here are a few examples of **sales**: *Amazing Spider-Man* #1 FN/FN+ $10,000; *Batman* #232 VF+ $90; *Fantastic Four* #2 GD $150; *Hulk* #1 FN $2200; *Iron Man* #3 VF+ $ 60; *Spider-Man* #3 GD $200. Also, almost all Neal Adams comics in VF or better sell (still) as fast as they come in.

On the Golden Age market, I don't have much to report except I got in a run of *Ghost* (Fiction House) at the Seattle show and within two weeks had sold every issue (all in VG to VF) without giving a dime off.

I wish I had more time to share the info, but I will say, original art has been paying a lot of bills lately—'70s and '80s art is selling real strong right now.

Jamie Newbold

Southern California Comics
8280 Clairemont Mesa Blvd.
San Diego, CA 92111
858-715-8669
Socalcom@aol.com

We're back from the Wizard World Con in Long Beach. The show was orderly and seemed well-attended. My friends and I went up to spend money and explore. I noticed that the crowds were lean around the comic book dealers set up at the show. I'll leave further comments about comic sales at the show to others.

We've struggled to buy early Marvels at wholesale prices for our store with little success. That commodity has become difficult for us to nail down. We've offered as much as 75% of *Guide* for a variety of Marvel keys in low- to mid-grades with little success. Each grade for any book has an audience greater than the supply at our store.

Other stores and other venues may also be experiencing the same rabid sales. We saw those comics in abundance at some booths at the Con and MIA at others. Prices in all grades for such titles as *Daredevil* #1 or *Amazing Spider-Man* #14 were commonly higher-priced in all grades. We discovered this at a glance at most of the booths that possessed them. We learned a while back that these Marvel keys can be comfortably sold above *Guide* at the store and convention level. Even eBay has turned away bargain hunters trying to get Marvel keys at below *Guide*.

We need that warehouse find right about now!

Golden Age: *Amazing Adventures* #6 GD/VG $31; *Batman* #33 GD $120;

Fantastic #8 VG/FN $100; *Superboy* #29 VG $70; *Witches Tales* #23 FN $72; *World's Finest* #16 CGC 6.0 FN $425.

Silver Age: *Amazing Spider-Man* #85 FN/VF $35; *Avengers* #4 VG $290, #56 NM $55, #66 VF $23, #100 FN $27; *Brave and the Bold* #96 NM- $30, #100 VF $34; *Conan* #1 FN/VF $128; *Daredevil* #5 VG/FN $50, #6 FN $42; *Fantastic Four* #2 VG+ $625, #102 NM- $50; *Green Lantern/Green Arrow* #78 VF- $35; *Inc. Hulk* #122 VF/NM $56, #123 VF/NM $29; *Iron Man* #14 VF- $25; *Tales Of Suspense* #60 FN+ $52, #74 VF+ $40, #93 VF- $30; *Wonder Woman* #159 VF $65; *X-Men* #12 FN $102, #14 FN- $77, #65 F/VF $40.

Bronze Age: *Amazing Spider-Man* #136 NM- $80, #162 NM $30, #177 NM $25; *Daredevil* #158 CGC 9.0 $75, #180 NM $12, #181 NM $22; *Inc. Hulk* #200 VF/NM $25; *Justice League of America* #109 NM $20, #110 VF $25; *Marvel Team-Up* #3 NM- $50; *Uncanny X-Men* #101 VF $85, #135 NM $45.

Modern Age: *Amazing Spider-Man* #299 NM- $25, #300 NM $100, #300 F/VF $40; *Batman* #608 NM $30; *From Hell* #1 NM $20; *Origin* #1 NM $40; *Superman* #75 (Platinum Ed.) NM $55; *Transformers* #75 NM $14; *Ultimate X-Men* #1 NM $35.

Al Stoltz

Basement Comics
Basmntcomx@aol.com

Let the Season Begin! The big shows have started and we did two of this year's big shows already. Mega Con in Florida and Motor City Convention in Chicago were back-to-back in March and we did them both. We first did the nice long 13-hour ride to Florida from here in Maryland and were pleased with the high 70 degree weather and sunshine— too bad we would be in a building for the whole weekend.

Set up was the usual easy at Mega Con and the ladies in charge are a pleasure to deal with. A pretty big room but the downside was comic dealers, not represented in huge numbers, are so scattered out inside that buyers had to really look to find us among the swords and manga dealers.

Friday evening opened and saw a nice stream of hard core buyers and box kickers. We sold mostly wall books like *Amazing Spider-Man* #129 and a very nice *Avengers* #3. A good mix of items and we ended Friday pretty happy. Saturday came and we noticed two things, people wanted high grade Bronze and Silver and the air conditioning was set so low we were freezing to death!

Saturday had a large crowd similar to last year's and they came in ready to buy and rip through the inventory. A box of high grade material we were ready to submit to CGC was pried away from us at a decent mark up and the new owner I am sure rushed the books over to CGC anyway.

Sunday was as slow a day as I have ever seen at the show, but by then we had hit our money level we needed and just enjoyed a calmer day and went out and spent some money. We did end up with a *Reform School Girl* from the famous Mama's Collection that was turned up by Mike Carbonaro. A very cool addition to our inventory and we did submit it for grading at the show.

The next weekend found us in Chicago. I can tell you that it was *not* in the 80s and was *not* sunny. It snowed, it howled and it was *cold*. I wore the same stupid light jacket I had with me for Florida, not a bright move. Mike and his staff were as friendly as ever and load in was just as pleasant. Show opened on Saturday and we were off and running. We sold a bunch of strange books such as *Centurian of Rome* and a *Teenage Dope Slaves* early on. Oddball esoteric seemed to be the books of choice at this show for buyers and we were glad we had lots of them. Sunday again seemed to be our slower of the days but we had a good show by then and just packed and organized out inventory for the next shows. This is a *great* place to pick up new material for the serious buyer.

Dealers had plenty to offer and we bought both a nice pile of coverless early Golden Age and a nice box full of cool fanzines. A must-attend show for the comic junkie that needs a serious fix after a long winter sleep. It seems like buyers these days see High Grade as the only comics to buy and that is a sad thing for the other 95% of the comics in a dealer room. Interest, prices and hype will have to hit a pop point at some time in the future, nothing runs forever that hot without a problem—can anyone remember Enron?

We all profit from this craziness, but getting customers to recognize other older comics that are even rarer but not in grade may be a good thing for the business in the long run. Anyone out there ever heard of having a diversified portfolio?? We also got the official word that Big Little Books will be in the upcoming *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide*. Any input on that from the readers? Should they be in the *Guide*? Are they really comics? Drop me an e-mail and let me know.

Opinions expressed in CBM *"Market Reports" are solely those of the individual dealers and collectors who contribute them. Prices vary by location, date of transaction and other factors.*

Naiman Report

[continued from page 71]

impressed by the show's efficiency. The people I talked to that set up there were also impressed. It's the difference between a non-profit show and a for-profit show. Wizard is a unique brand and appeals to a specific fan base. Not everyone is on-board with their style and emphasis. But, they know conventions and they know how to promote. It was reported to me that their efficiency and fair treatment of comicbook dealers was appreciated.

And before I leave you for this month, don't let it be said that I do not report mainstream collectibles! ***Amazing Spider-Man* #1 CGC NM+ 9.6** (item #2231945158) recently sold on eBay. The winning bid was $107,655.55 **(3.36X *Guide*).** That's one heck of a Final Value Fee that eBay gets for doing nothing!

by Michelle Nolan

A Cusp Year

If you loved super-heroes, 1950 was not a wonderful year. But if you loved other forms of imagination, it was one of the most wonderful years in the history of comics.

Most of the established Golden Age heroes were phased out in 1948 and 1949, leaving a handful of national, Fawcett and Quality super stars and a few others. But there were plenty of wonderful concepts to take their places.

The year 1950, of course, is far and away best known for the debut of the first "modern" EC horror and science fiction comics from the fertile factory of Bill Gaines—*Crypt of Terror* #17 (Apr/May), *Vault of Horror* #12 (Apr/May), *Haunt of Fear* #15 (May/Jun), *Weird Fantasy* #13 (May/Jun) and *Weird Science* #12 (May/Jun).

Sometimes it's difficult to believe that these revolutionary EC titles appeared only 16 years after *Famous Funnies* became the first regularly published comic book, only 12 years after Superman's debut in *Action Comics* #1, only nine years after the first appearance of Captain America. Verily, EC was surely a quantum leap.

But the EC story has been documented to death—Ouch! Now that's a truly horrible pun—and there were lots of other cool comics produced in 1950.

Many fans don't realize it, but the demise of most super-heroes did not result in fewer newsstand comics. Quite the contrary! Circulation, though, did remain flat at best—in fact, it probably declined a bit—as some 2,283 newsstand comics were produced in 1950, give or take a few that may not exist. That was a record for the industry, albeit only 30 more issues than were published with 1949 dates.

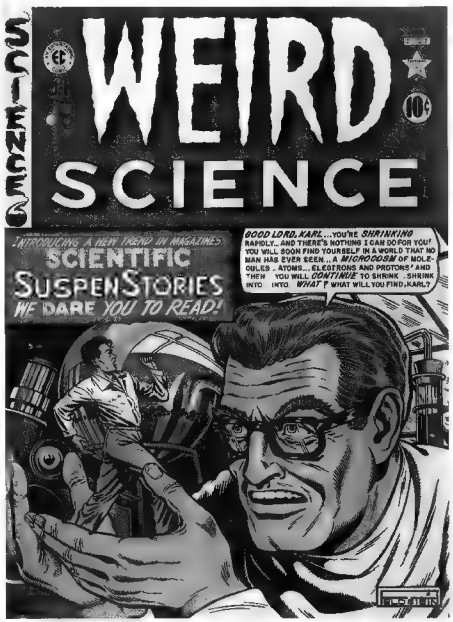
With more than 125 romance titles available on the stands in the first half of 1950, I have often written extensively about what I long ago named "The Love Glut." Dozens of titles were cancelled or put on hiatus. Quality, for example, dropped all 14 of its romance titles by midsummer, with the last issues variously dated August, September or October. Legendary publisher Everett "Busy" Arnold's wonderful company brought back only three love titles in 1951, beginning in March, but eventually published eight regular romance titles in the company's last three years (1954-56) before Quality folded.

One of the most politically incorrect and esoteric titles of all time was part of the 1950 "Love Glut"—Fawcett's three-issue run of *Negro Romances*. Amazingly, Charlton reprinted the second issue as #4 in 1955, complete with the Comics Code Authority seal of approval! The mind utterly boggles!

Other than the historic EC issues, what were the most important comics of 1950? My nominations are, in no particular order, *Archie's Girls Betty and Veronica* #1, *Archie Annual* #1, *Strange Adventures* #1, *Superboy* #10 and *Howdy Doody* #1.

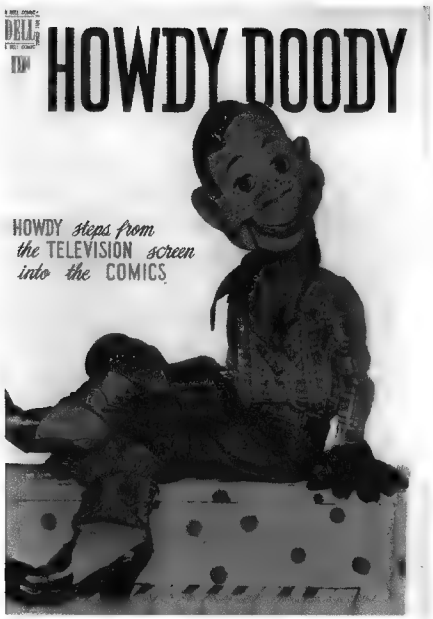
Superboy #10 (Sep/Oct) introduces Lana Lang. Who would have guessed, reading that story more than half a century ago, that the character would still be an important part of a popular television series in the 21st century? Lana, of course, was a gender stroke of genius, presenting Superboy with the same conflicts that Superman faced with Lois Lane.

Strange Adventures #1 (Aug/Sep) not only was one of the earliest pure science fiction comics, but helped launch 1930's sci fi fan supreme Julius Schwartz to one of the greatest of all comic book editing careers. I can only guess the slickly produced *Strange Adventures* absolutely sold like crazy, since it became a monthly with #3 (Dec) and emerged as one of the best written and drawn comics on the stands for more than a dozen years.


WEIRD SCIENCE
10¢
INTRODUCING A NEW TREND IN MAGAZINES!
SCIENTIFIC SUSPENSTORIES
WE DARE YOU TO READ!
GOOD LORD, KARL... YOU'RE SHRINKING RAPIDLY... AND THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO FOR YOU! YOU WILL SOON FIND YOURSELF IN A WORLD THAT NO MAN HAS EVER SEEN... A MICROCOSM OF MOLECULES... ATOMS... ELECTRONS AND PROTONS! AND THEN YOU WILL CONTINUE TO SHRINK... SHRINK INTO... INTO... WHAT? WHAT WILL YOU FIND, KARL?

The time was right for *Strange Adventures*. Oddly, however, the first crack in the mighty Fiction House façade appeared in 1950 with the problem of *Planet Comics*, which appeared only once on the stands that year with #64 (Spring). *Planet* picked up with #65 in 1951 and staggered through #73 in 1953, but it was never really the same.

Four of the classic Fiction House "Big Six"—*Jumbo*, *Jungle*, *Fight* and *Rangers*—remained on their regular schedules in 1950, but only three issues of *Wings* appeared (#111-113) along with the single issue of *Planet*. This foreshadowed the end for Fiction House, which staggered into 1954 with its final



10 comic books, followed by its final pulps in 1955.

In the wake of the Archie Series one-shot debuts of solo titles featuring *Jughead*, *Reggie* and *Katy Keene* in 1949, the company continued its steady expansion with the first issue of *Archie's Girls Betty & Veronica* in 1950. Only bad boy *Reggie*, which lasted just 14 issues in its original run, did not become a huge 1950s commercial success.

I've always felt that the immense criticism comic books faced in the first half of the 1950s—culminating in Fredric Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent* and the ensuing Comics Code Authority in 1954—provided a huge lift for the Archie Series. The Comics Code itself may have been the best thing ever to happen to Archie's circulation.

Archie Annual #1 was dated "1950 edition" on both the cover and in the indicia, even though it was copyrighted 1949. This issue, along with Dell titles such as *Vacation Parade* #1, continued to usher in the era of hugely successful squarebound comics.

"Of course, all of the stories appearing in this magazine are Brand New, and of the same high quality that appear in our regular magazines," read a letter from Archie himself inside the front cover. "We felt that the Annual Edition would appeal to you as a magazine to be treasured and kept as a Souvenir Book and this magazine, a first edition, should be a proud addition to your library. Sometimes, FIRST EDITIONS have a value exceeding the price you pay, and it has happened often in the publishing business that the publisher himself asks readers for certain issues that he needs for special purposes and offers to pay a premium price. So hold on to this magazine. One never knows."

Take a bow, Archie! You get an "A" in speculation! Not only do the *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* values range from $165 in "good" to $1,900 in "near-mint," *Archie Annual* #1 is legitimately listed as scarce. This is the earliest reference I have ever been able to find in any comic book regarding its possible value in the future. As I recall, the Archie Series folks did indeed offer to buy back annuals at one time or another—for the original quarter.

There was even an advertisement that urged readers to send 25 cents in coin to send a copy of *Archie Annual* #1 as a gift, which would arrive postage paid complete with a pinup of Archie. I wonder how many of those pinups still exist?

Just about everyone knows that Marvel/Timely published its last issue of Captain America as *Captain America's Weird Tales* #75 (Feb 1950), sans our good and once glorious Cap. But did you know the last appearance of an authentic Golden Age Marvel super-hero was a totally obscure two-page strip in *Marvel Tales* #97 (Sep 1950)? That's right—Sun Girl, the Mysterious Beauty, popped up with a routine inventory piece in #97, no doubt puzzling more than a few readers who had missed the transition from heroes to horror when *Marvel Mystery* #92 became *Marvel Tales* #93 in 1949.

To be sure, Marvel's *Venus* continued a 19-issue run with four issues in 1950 (#8-11), but she was more of a fantasy character than a true super-heroine, appearing in a unique universe from 1948-52 totally apart from other Marvel characters. By the way, Timely's second incarnation of *Marvel Boy*, who debuted in #1 (Dec 1950), was an Atom Age creation with no Golden Age roots.

Howdy Doody #1 from Dell was the first comic book based purely on a television show, setting the stage for the flood of television and movie comics in the 1950s. Fawcett was the prime mover, though, in getting the film adaptation craze going with eight issues of *Fawcett Movie Comics* in 1950, followed late in the year by *Motion Picture Comics*. The first issue of *Fawcett Movie Comics* hit the stands in 1949, but the effect wasn't felt until 1950, and many imitations ensued.

One of the oddest comics of 1950 was the imitative but amusing *Black Rider* #8 (Mar), the first issue. It hit the stands complete with a phenomenal photo cover of none other than editor Stan Lee astride his sturdy steed Satan(!), with all but his forehead and eyes covered and looking for all the world like Charles Starrett, the Durango Kid of film and comic book fame. This issue was inexpensive until word got out that it was indeed Stan on that handsome horse, so now everyone wants one!

In another noteworthy development of 1950, Harvey rescued the licenses of *Blondie* and *Dick Tracy* from their relatively obscurity at David McKay and Dell. The first Harvey issues for both icons were #16 (Mar), and they went on to great sales success during the decade.

I still maintain that one of the oddest developments of 1950 was the stubborn determination of the Justice Society of America to last out the year. Even though Wonder Woman was the only one of the seven active members still being published anywhere other than in *All-Star Comics* #51-56. Their last Golden Age appearance was in #57 (Feb/Mar 1951).

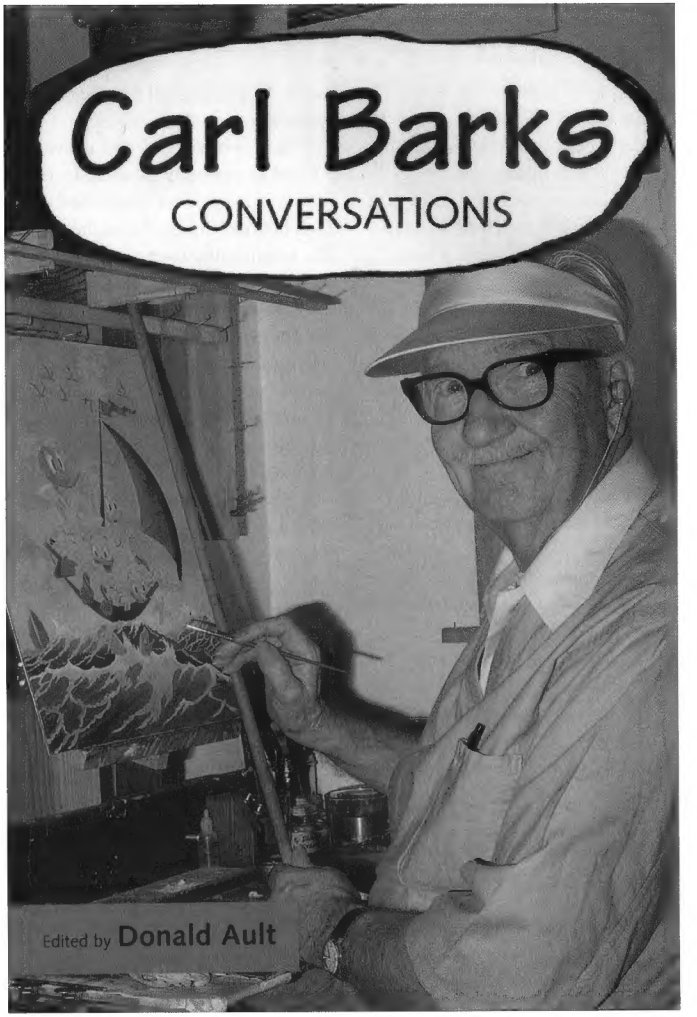
I've always wondered what new readers in 1950—who missed the JSA in the 1940s—must have thought. But that's just another wonderful story.

Book Review

by Paul Gravett

© copyright 2004 **Paul Gravett**

CARL BARKS CONVERSATIONS, edited by Donald Ault (University Press of Mississippi, 2003) $18.00 ISBN 1-57806-501-1



After Milton Caniff and Charles Schulz, it is the turn of Carl Barks in the third in this essential series edited by M. Thomas Inge of books compiling Conversations with Comic Artists. From a wealth of interviews with the creator of Scrooge McDuck running to some 170,000 words, editor Donald Ault has painstakingly refined this down to one half to arrive at this revelatory sampling of 24 interviews, seven of which Ault participated in himself. These conversations span from Barks' first ever recorded encounter with comic fans Don and Maggie Thompson and Malcolm Willits conducted in 1962 to his very last in 2000.

An English professor at the University of Florida, Ault is the ideal choice for this task. As well as sharing Disney's famous duck's first name, he brings years of close readings of Barks' comic book oeuvre and a deep respect for Barks' determination to be a cartoonist and storyteller in control of his work in the face of extraordinary setbacks and sacrifices.

For much of his career, Barks, like all Disney comic artists, worked anonymously. The only signature allowed was that of Uncle Walt himself, supposedly to preserve the illusion that he wrote and drew everything himself. Even when Barks' identity initially came out into the open, first in May 1955 in a feature by Charles Beaumont for the periodical *Fortnight* and then in 1957 when collector Willits learned his name and address from Frank Reilly in the Disney strip department, it took considerable time before Barks became widely known among the fan community, let alone the broader public in America and around the world who read his multi-million selling comic books. The Disney company only allowed Willits' and the Thompsons' 1962 interview to be published finally in 1968, two years after Disney had died, and even then in only 475 copies of the fanzine *Comic Art* No. 7. Fittingly, this historic document opens the book.

Ault has gone to great lengths to find not only the best interviews available, but also to include unpublished or little seen gems. Nearly half of the conversations were either only partially published before or appear here for the first time. His sources range from the 1996 video production *The Duckman* to interviews from Germany, Finland and Italy newly translated into English. As Ault explains in his enlightening introduction, "One of the most important consequences of this book is the way it allows readers to put Barks' life together for themselves in new ways, almost in the form of a jigsaw puzzle." Cross-referencing with Ault's thorough 12-page

chronology as well as the index, I found it fascinating to explore Barks' life story as it unfolded through the conversations presented in the order they were conducted. There are inevitably some overlaps but I found it enriching to learn about Barks' perspectives looking back on the same experiences.

It became clear to me from the interviews which Ault himself assists with that he formed a truly trusting friendship with Barks, which allows them to have some good-humored, candid discussions about the bad timings and wrong decisions Barks had to cope with through his life. My admiration for Barks only increased, the more I realized how he kept on trying and kept on working, often in challenging circumstances and amid personal crises. He seems to have had a faith that, no matter what, he could start anew and make it through somehow. At one low point, when Barks moved out at the dissolution of his second marriage, he describes "living in a little room they made in a corner of a little warehouse. I had two blankets that I had gotten out of the whole deal and my drawing board, of course, and my [*National*] *Geographics*." Incredibly, Barks created some of his greatest work in these dire circumstances—indeed, they may have even helped him. He recalls, "Doing these stories was such a relief from my own everyday troubles and problems." This almost therapeutic quality, like some soothing balm for the troubled soul, may help to explain why Barks' comic books continue to enchant readers worldwide.

Ault closes this book with a last touching conversation, taped on a visit to Barks' home, only two months before his death from leukemia. Tired and weak, Barks remains dutiful, holding onto his responsibilities, coping with royalties, his family trust and a less than helpful bank. It ends with the mail bringing a state income tax refund and Barks laughing, "That kind of takes the pressure off for a little while." Barks said he had no fear of death, nor any belief in an afterlife. "I think of death as total peace. You're beyond the clutches of all those who would crush you."

There is one Carl Barks conversation I heard in person in London. In 1994, after third wife Garé Barks died, Carl took his first trip abroad at the age of 93. His whistle-stop Grand Tour of Europe took him to Scandinavia, Germany and Italy, where his comics have become phenomenally popular—national institutions read and re-read by generations. Sadly, in Britain, his work and his name are much less famous. At the time I was director of the fledgling National Museum of Cartoon Art in London and, during his stopover there, I was able to invite a band of admirers there to meet 'the Duck Man' and attend a reception, where he talked with broadcasting celebrity and Barks connoisseur Paul Gambaccini. For me, it was an honor and a pleasure to meet Barks and welcome him to the Museum. He was particularly taken with the working models I demonstrated to him, which were based on the absurdly serious contraptions designed by the cartoonist William Heath Robinson, Britain's equivalent of Rube Goldberg and reminders of Bark's inspired inventor Gyro Gearloose.

Joining me in the audience for that very special evening was a friend, David Clarvis, a lifelong Barks admirer and collector and a gifted illustrator and artist himself. Sadly, David passed away far too young last year, but, thanks to the intervention of a mutual friend, writer and film editor Ian Rakoff, the Disney comics collection David loved so much has since been acquired for the nation by the National Art Library. It forms a part of the Rakoff Collection of Graphic Literature, the largest and most significant comic book resource in the country, and, once they are catalogued they will be accessible to anyone interested in reading and studying them. Both this institutional acquisition and Donald Ault's sterling efforts editing his remarkable book demonstrate that the major cultural importance of Barks' achievement is being recognized.

Inspiration Central

[continued from page 21]

humor into the adventure. I guess from reading *Wash Tubbs* and *Captain Easy*, which later became *Buzz Sawyer*.

CBM: What is it about the adventure story that fascinated you then, and now?

Ayers: Well, they became kind of like real in my imagination. I can identify with the characters. I get to know them, they're each individuals. Whereas, if you just look at an illustration, they're pretty drawings, that's it.

CBM: Right, those situations prove to be pretty revealing of character, don't they?

Ayers: Yeah.

You know, what I just told you pointed out to me, too, that I'm a lot different from my colleagues. [Laughter] You ask them that question, and they'll rattle off famous illustrators and painters like Wyeth and others that they really copy. But that wasn't my thing. My thing was stories.

In fact, in art school I got very upset one day because everything they did was one picture. And I said, "You're like still cameras. I'm a movie camera!" That was my comparison. I want movement.

HIS EYES FELL ON ONE SIGNIFICANT PAGE!
THE COLONEL TURNED TOO LATE! HE HEARD THE SUDDEN ROAR OF MOTORS AND HE KNEW THE END HAD COME...
WHAT?! NEIN! NEIN!
AAA GGHHHHHH!

Early Ayers with movement within and without the panels.

HERITAGE COMICS

Your Source For All The Best Pop Culture Has to Offer!

WHETHER YOUR PASSION IS COMIC BOOKS, ORIGINAL COMIC ART, MOVIE POSTERS, AMERICAN ILLUSTRATION ART, VINTAGE TOYS, RARE BOOKS, OR ANYTHING IN BETWEEN, HERITAGE IS YOUR ONE-STOP RESOURCE FOR ALL OF IT.

OUR NEXT SIGNATURE AUCTION WILL TAKE PLACE JUNE 11-13, 2004 AT OUR BEAUTIFUL NEW OFFICES IN DALLAS, TEXAS. REGISTER TO BID AND SEE FULL-COLOR PICTURES OF EACH LOT ON OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.HERITAGECOMICS.COM.

You can view enlargeable, full-color images of each item in the sale on our website at www.HeritageComics.com, where you can also enter your bids, or you can order our suite of catalogs by calling Kelly at 214-252-4290. A full set of catalogs (Comics & Original Art) is only $100, but we'll send you an auction credit good for $100 with each order, so how can you go wrong?

If you'd like to get in on the fun and consign material to a future sale, call or write Fred McSurley (FredM@HeritageComics.com) at 214-252-4293 or Lon Allen (LonA@HeritageComics.com) at 214-252-4261, or Grey Smith (GreySM@HeritageComics.com) for movie material at 214-668-6928 today. The earliest consignments get the most publicity, so make that call NOW!

And be sure to join our free comics community (over 20,000 members and growing fast) at:

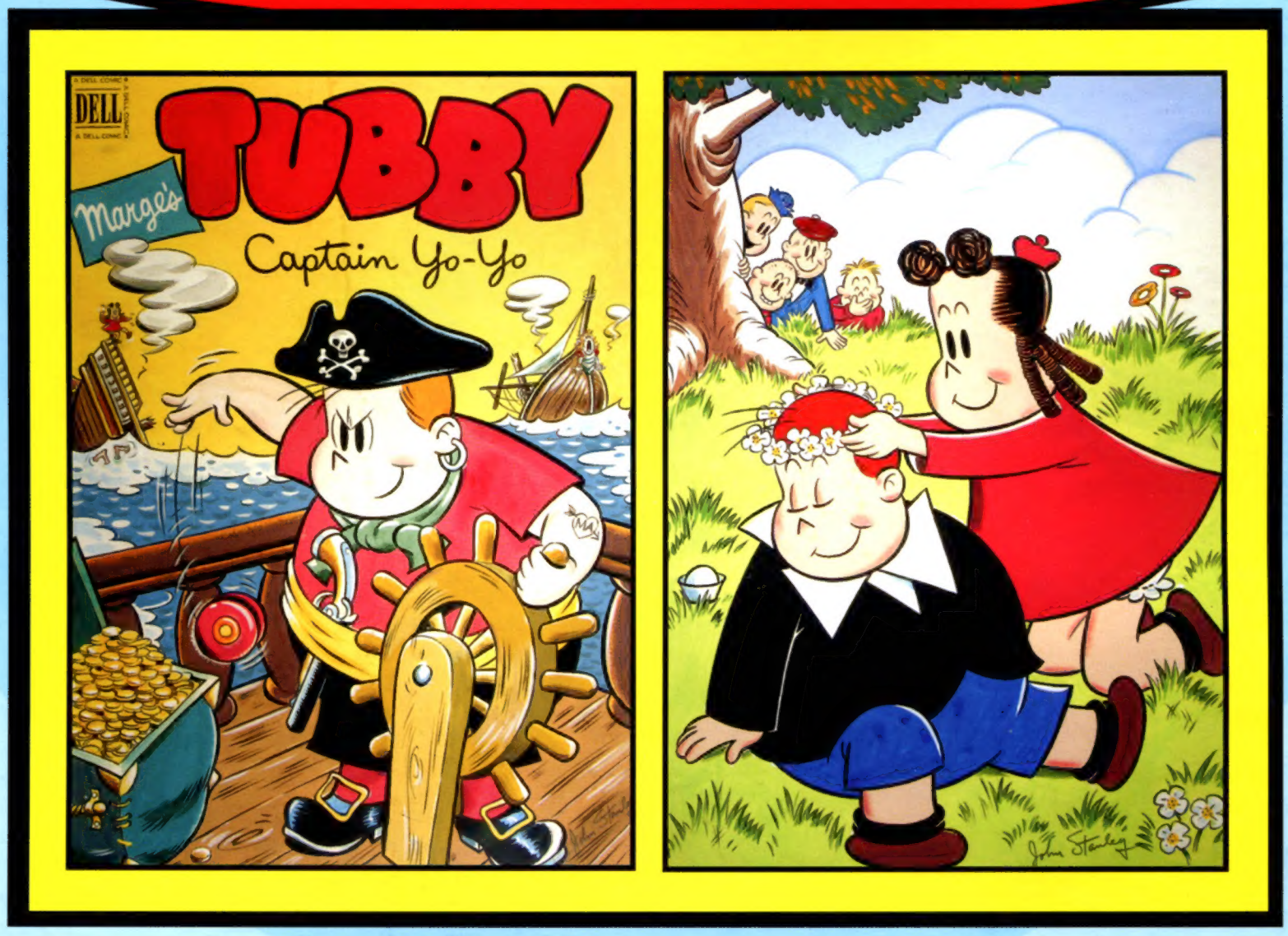
WWW.HERITAGECOMICS.COM

CGC Comics Guaranty, LLC

3500 Maple Avenue • 17th Floor • Dallas, Texas 75219-3941 • 214-528-3500 • 1-800-872-6467 • Fax: 214-443-8411

WANTED:
JOHN STANLEY
COVER RECREATIONS

PAYING $5,000 EACH



All characters ™ & ©2004 respective Copyright holders.

We're looking to buy the amazing comic book cover recreations of Little Lulu and Tubby by John Stanley (completed 1977-1989). If you have one and you're interested in selling, contact John K. Snyder, Jr. toll free at (888) 355-9800 ext. 271 or email sjohn@diamondgalleries.com.

DIAMOND
INTERNATIONAL GALLERIES

1966 Greenspring Drive, Timonium, Maryland 21093
Toll Free (888) 355-9800 · Fax (410) 560-7143 · www.diamondgalleries.com

Love collectibles? Sign up for our free, weekly email newsletter, *Scoop*.
Visit http://scoop.diamondgalleries.com/signup for more details!